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USE OF JAPANESE-LANGUAGE MATERIALS FROM A SCHOLAR'S PERSPECTIVE

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The organizers of this meeting have asked me to explain how a scholar far from a major East Asian collection manages to escape from the tobacco fields of North Carolina to do research on Japan. I should express first my gratitude toward all of the librarians who have helped me in past years. At whatever archives I have used, I have found the staff to be enthusiastic and co-operative. Hideo Kaneko at Yale aided me enormously with my doctoral dissertation. Later Edward Martinique at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) and Key Kobayashi at the Library of Congress (LC), among many others, provided much help.

Before explaining how I carry out research, I should sketch the library situation at UNC-CH. The unusual circumstances there perhaps hold some intrinsic interest. They also determine my strategy for a project. UNC-CH has an East Asian bibliographer, an annual budget for book purchases, and a private endowment for the Asian collection. The difficulty from the perspective of a Japan specialist is the predominance of materials in the Chinese language. The library contains about 62,000 Chinese volumes and 3,000 Japanese ones.

One might well wonder why this imbalance exists. The reasons lie in the past. Most of the first Asianists hired at the university were specialists on China; a tilt toward Chinese materials started early. The administration also claimed that at some hazy point in the distant past UNC-CH and Duke University had pledged to split their collections. UNC-CH would focus on China while Duke would handle Japan. No one could remember who had negotiated this pact; nor did a written copy survive. Yet, cost-conscious officials treated the agreement as sacred script.

Finally, about five years ago the East Asian Studies faculties at each institution decided to make the arrangement official. We believed that it would yield the most efficient use of the funds available at both institutions for building good collections of Japanese and Chinese materials. Duke would purchase Japanese materials, and UNC-CH would buy Chinese ones. After much discussion, East Asian specialists at each university received special borrowing privileges -- six months instead of the normal one-month period -- at the other library.

The Perkins Library at Duke has thus become a major local resource for research on Japan. The library has from 10,000 to 12,000 volumes of Japanese-language materials including a good collection of current journals. My own university helps in two ways. The Davis Library will purchase materials that directly relate to a research project if they are not too expensive. A Research Council also awards grants for travel to archives. One must compete for these, but, perhaps because they represent modest amounts of money, they have not been too difficult for someone with a well-defined project to get.

Let me now explain how a research project can evolve. A review of my experience in completing a study of the Japanese business community in the 1920s and 1930s leads to the following conclusions. A project can divide into four distinct stages. Moreover, one can utilize three levels of archives: local libraries, larger collections, and archives in Japan. The local and larger collections play a major role in the first two stages and in the final one.

I term the first stage "fishing." At this point one forms and tests a topic. In my case I wanted to probe the opinions of business leaders in the 1930s. Because Duke had the magazine *Chūō*

Kōron, I could comb it for articles by executives and found several useful items. This search helped me judge which economic issues received the most attention and gave me confidence that businessmen did publish articles with some frequency.

This experience brings out an important point -- the utility of basic resources in a local library. Magazine or newspaper sources can give important background information for many topics in modern Japanese history. Access to current journals from Japan is also crucial. Browsing through articles based on recent research often inspires thoughts about a new research topic.

The "fishing" helped me decide to progress to the next stage of "exploring." One has to do this at a larger library, in my case, the Library of Congress. The availability of the LC's *Far Eastern Languages Catalogue* at UNC-CH proved very useful. Although the catalog was dated in that it was published in 1972, it informed me that the LC held certain books and business magazines. This information enabled me to write a successful application for funds to travel to Washington, D.C. and plan a more efficient use of my time there.

This last point deserves emphasis. Whatever the origin of funds, most grants to visit archives in the United States are small. They aim to permit a few days' work, or perhaps a week's worth. I spent about five days at LC on this visit and photocopied materials furiously. Reading them occupied the rest of the summer that year.

This trip got my project off to a good start. Even though my research moved way beyond my original ideas, a few of the sources that I found then contributed to my final manuscript. Having completed that work, I could then focus on more specialized materials in Japan.

In this regard, let me say that those of us near small collections could use even more information about which materials the larger libraries have. This would help us make better decisions about where to go and how to use our time. Perhaps the staff at larger collections could investigate ways of placing more of their catalogs on an online service. Larger collections too could advertise better their willingness and ability to respond to requests about the availability of materials on topics. We also need funds for duplication or a discount rate for photocopying. Scholars in my situation have little choice but to cart materials back home to analyze and the costs of copying these are high.

The third stage consists of the "pilgrimage." This refers, of course, to the trip to Japan. For me, this involved two summer visits. Again, I concentrated on locating and duplicating materials. With the help of Japanese colleagues I discovered many rich sources essential to the success of my project.

In the final stage one begins to write and tidy up the research. Once again the local and regional collections assumed importance. As I composed, I became aware of gaps in my knowledge of some details. I realized that I might not know the biography of a major spokesman or all of the important provisions of a law. Hence, basic sources, such as biographical dictionaries and newspapers, had great value.

Interlibrary loan helped too, thanks to an exchange of information with another library. The Davis Library at UNC-CH and the Alderman Library at the University of Virginia (UVA) regularly send each other information on new purchases of East Asian materials. Through this process I learned of many books on my topic that UVA had bought, and I ordered them on interlibrary loan.

Let me offer a few conclusions based on my experiences outlined above and projections about the conduct of research about Japan in the future. Many American scholars of Japan share my circumstances of not residing near large collections of Japanese-language materials. A glance at

advertisements for teaching jobs gives the impression that these positions will increase. Professors, however, will want to continue their research. Pressures to publish now pervade academia perhaps more than ever before. Yet, for many scholars, extended stays in Japan will become more difficult. For many of my peers, dual career families impose constraints; so do child care and the slide of the dollar, which seems determined to seek parity with the yen. For example, some grants that scholars usually used in the past to spend a year in Japan are now sometimes used to collect materials abroad for a few months and to write at home for the balance of the period covered by the award. This trend means that many researchers will have to plan stage three in my schema more carefully in order to use time in Japan as effectively as possible.

The other stages of a project are bound to become more important. Hence, local libraries should focus on providing basic sources and enhancing a scholar's use of larger collections. We need most to know what is happening in our respective fields and where relevant materials are kept. Both local and larger collections should focus on informing scholars about the location of materials in Japan. From my perspective, the three different levels of archives complement each other and each performs a vital role.

(This article is adapted from a talk given at the East Coast Regional Japanese Libraries Conference in June 1987 at Princeton University, Princeton, N.J. See *CEAL Bulletin* no. 83.)