

Japanese language collection of literature in the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature

全ロシア国立外国文献図書館の日本語文学コレクション

By Asadova Ekaterina

Dear friends, first of all I wanted to thank the board of the European Association of Japanese Resource Specialists for the amazing opportunity to participate in this conference. I sincerely hope that this week will bring us a lot of positive emotions and it will help to further improve international cooperation network in the field of Japanese resources conservation and research.

Let me introduce myself. My name is Asadova Ekaterina. I have been working in the Margarita Rudomino All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature for almost four years. Through these years, I have been supervising the Library's Japanese books, serial and periodical publications collection, working as both an acquisition librarian and a cataloguer. It was a very hard task because when I came to the Library its Eastern collection laid untouched in almost static state for a very long time. Today I would like to share with you my report about the current state of Japanese language collection in the LFL, about the work I try to do and some goals I want to achieve. First, let me give you some brief historical background of the LFL's and its Oriental literature Department.

First, this year is especially important for my organization, because it is our 100th anniversary as the history of the Library for Foreign Literature dates back to the 1920s when in the October 1921 the Library was founded as an independent institution. At that moment the library had only 100 books and 5 people as staff members. In 1922 the library opened its doors to readers. The current building which you can see on the photo was built in 1965. By that moment the Library had more than 4 million books and more than 300 staff members. At one point there were 700 people working in the building, but that amount had decreased with time.

In 1949, the LFL starts to gather first eastern books in Chinese, laying the foundation for the future department of oriental languages.

In 1955, the Department of Oriental Literature has been created.

I am still trying to find out when the first Japanese books started to appear in the Library and what were they, but the search is complicated due to the fact that all records of the incoming documents are kept in handwritten books at the Document registration sector. So I do not always have an access to the record books and it takes a lot of time.

Still, my colleagues managed to find an article in the published materials of the XXX International Congress on Historiography and Source Studies of Asia and Africa which stated that in 1978, 1979 and 1981 LFL has handed over a number of Japanese documents to the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences. In total, the Institute has received 60 documents in 190 tomes of 国学 *kokugaku* and 漢学 *kangaku* studies. Most of the books had handwritten inscriptions in German language with transliterated titles, authors and other publisher's imprints. The article's author states that two of the books had stamps of "Japan Institut". This German institution was founded in 1926 and existed until 1945. Author suggests that those books were a part of so called "war trophies" – books that were taken as a compensation for the loss of Russian libraries during the war. If this statement is true, then I can assume that Japanese language books first appeared in the LFL's book stack right after the WWII was over.

In Soviet era book acquisition process was very active. The LFL gathered an extensive collection of Japanese language documents not only on humanities and social studies but also on natural, formal and applied sciences. There was an international book exchange, constant book and serial publications purchase and donations. The Department of Oriental Literature had its own working space and reading hall, where specialist were engaged in cataloguing, acquisition, research, reference & information activities.

In 1975, the Library has changed its collection profile to the humanities and social sciences only. During that period hundreds of Japanese books on mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy and other subjects were donated and handed over to other Moscow libraries according to their profiles. These changes were partly due to space constraints of the book stack. Nevertheless, the Japanese book acquisition and bibliographing continued.

In 1984, the Department of Oriental Literature was disbanded and closed. Reasons for this decision are very vague. However, this was not the end of the Japanese collection. This conclusion is based on the analysis of the codes assigned to the books in the bookstack. First two digits of the coding system stand for a year in which a book was registered in the Library. I assume that the book acquiring process was still very active in 1980s judging by the amount of books with the corresponding codes.

The 1990s became a time of hardship for the whole country and for the Library in particular. The acquisition rate was severely damaged as the library did not have the money to purchase books. There was not enough money even to pay salaries. Thus, starting from the 90s, massive gaps began to form in Japanese literature collection. Nevertheless, in 1994, the Sector of Oriental Literature has been opened again, now as a part of the Department of Acquisitions. However, it had much less staff members and reduced book acquisition rate – most of them were a part of gifts and international book exchange.

In 2013, the Sector of Oriental Literature has been disbanded and permanently closed.

In 2016, the Department of International Book Exchange had been disbanded and closed. After that Japanese book acquisition existed mostly through readers gifts. Serial and periodical publications continued to flow into the LFL as gifts thanks to the connections with Japanese organizations that were formed during the Department of International Book Exchange's existence, for which we are immensely grateful.

Present times

The LFL has an extensive collection of books, serial and periodical publications in 144 foreign languages, 55 of which are oriental languages. The data are presented based on the analysis of the General Alphabetical Catalogue of the LFL.

The largest document collection clusters are:

- Arabic - 9 555 documents
- Mongolian language - 12 128 documents
- Indian languages - 12 647 documents
- Chinese language - 16 020 documents

When I came to the Library I was sure that the Chinese collection will be the largest. However, it turned out that the Japanese literature collection is the largest one.

- Japanese language - 25 855 documents

The data are given as of 01.06.2021

Let us start our review of the collection. I would like to emphasize that the collection analysis is still in progress, so today's data will contain the information that I have been able to collect so far.

First, the main idea of the Library was to collect new and relevant fiction and scientific literature. Therefore, the collection of Japanese literature is mainly represented by contemporary publications of the 20th century. All literature published before the 1890s, as a rule, goes to the Center for the Rare Books and Collections, which operates separately from my Department. However, their relatively small collection of Japanese manuscripts is still not fully represented in the online public access catalog, so its analysis is yet to come.

Fiction collection can be divided in three groups: 1) Japanese fiction; 2) Russian fiction translated to Japanese; 3) Other countries fiction translated to Japanese.

First group consists of 全集 *zenshu*, 選集 *senshu*, 集 *shu* and life time editions of various classic novelists and essayists: Yokomitsu Riichi, Yosano Hiroshi and Yosano Akiko, Wakayama Bokusui, Akutagawa Ryunosuke, Aono Suekichi, Kobayashi Hideo, Arishima Takeo, Dazai Osamu, Ibuse Masuji, Nagai Tatsuo, Iwano Homei, Izumi Kyoka, Inoue Yasushi, Ishikawa Jun, Sakaguchi Ango, Ishikawa Takuboku, Ito Sei, Takami Jun, Kawabata Yasunari, Kajii Motojiro, Koda Rohan, Kunikida Doppo, Masamune Hakucho, Mori Ogai, Muroo Saisei, Mushanokoji Saneatsu, Nagai Kafu, Natsume Soseki, Niwa Fumio, Hino Ashihei, Nogami Yaeko, Minamoto Yuriko, Noma Hiroshi, Mishima Yukio, Ozaki Koyo, Sato Haruo, Sato Ton, Shimazaki Toson etc. They are also represented as part of the larger series: 現代日本文學全集 by Chikuma shobo (1950s), 日本現代文學全集 by Kodansha (1960s), 昭和文學全集 by Kadokawa shoten (1950s) etc. Poets are represented by 歌集, 詩集, 句集 of Minamoto-no Sanetomo, Basho, Kyorai, Ryokan, Kobayashi Issa, Ihara Saikaku, Ishikawa Takuboku, Aso Jiro, Sato Haruo and many others. There are also several editions of Man'yoshu, Kokin wakashu and other 和歌集, 連歌集, 俳諧集. Japanese theatre is represented by several 戯曲集, 謡曲集, 狂言集, 脚本集 and compilations by Japanese dramatists. Bunkobon editions are also represented: 新潮文庫, 角川文庫, 岩波文庫 and other prominent series. 古典 literature is represented through several series – for example, 完訳日本の古典. Collections of Japanese literature Awards Winners are represented in several collections. However, awards winners of 90s and 00s are severely underrepresented due to the reasons stated previously.

Second group is also quite diverse. It contains Japanese translations of most prominent classical Russian writers: Dostoyevsky, Chekov, Tolstoy, Pushkin, Gorki, Gogol, Turgenev, Afanasyev, Bazhov, etc. Of course, there are many editions of Soviet era writers and poets: Mayakovskiy, Gaidar, Bianki etc. The collections of Russian and Soviet science fiction writers should be mentioned separately: Belyaev, Grin, Yefremov, Strugatskiy brothers and many others.

The third group is the most hard to briefly describe because it contains Japanese translations of various foreign literature: Chinese, British, American, French, German etc. There are several collections and series. For example, 東洋文庫 series (printed in 70s by Heibonsha) has Japanese translations of fiction, essays, journals and notes connected to the East in general and Japan in particular: 康熙帝伝 (Histoire de l'empereur de la Chine) by Joachim Bouvet, 十王子物語 (दशकुमारचरित) by Daṇḍin, アンコール踏査行 (Voyage au Cambodge) by Louis Delaporte, 郭沫若自伝 by Guo Moruo, etc.

Books on literary criticism and studies of literature can also be attributed to this part of the collection, which is centered on fiction. There are compilations and monographies about Japanese and non-Japanese (especially Russian) fiction in general, about authors, literary movements and history of literature. Books by Japanese and Russian literary critics exist in the collection.

Children's literature is also represent in great quantity. There are collections of Japanese children writer's (Watanabe Shigeo, Gomi Taro, Katayama Ken), fairytales and legends, translations of Western children's literature. Some of them touch hard topics of war – a number of children's books are focused on Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings and war in general. The collections of children's educational literature consists of encyclopedias and textbooks on various subjects – astronomy, physics, biology, history, etc. There are also Japanese language textbooks collection – for example, 尋常小学国語読本 *Jinjo shogaku kokugo dokuhon* is a series of reading books for primary school students printed in 1920-1930s by Ministry of Education (Mombusho).

Speaking about non-fiction literature it is important to remember about the period in which the main body of the collection was formed. Soviet era has determined the main focus of the acquisition by subjects: economics, politics, industry theory, law and social studies.

Economics is one of the largest clusters in the library. It has a vast amount of books about Japanese economy in general and at different periods of time (most of them are centered about Showa period). A lot of books provide analysis of the Japanese economy compared to the Western countries and analysis of Japan's role in the world economy processes. There are a lot of books providing Japanese economists analysis of Marxism, socialism, capitalisms and other economical systems.

Politics is another large cluster which shares general composition of the collection with the economy cluster. It represents books on Japan's domestic and foreign policy, Japan's role in the international arena. Materials on the Communist Party of Japan, its history and development, can be distinguished, but materials on other political parties are also in the collections. Some books are biographies, autobiographies, collections of essays of major Japanese politicians - prime ministers, party leaders, etc.

The third large cluster is law. Readers can find information on all aspects of Japanese law: criminal, procedural, constitutional, civil etc. Some of the materials describe the issues of workers' rights in Japan. Law compilations are also represented. Two of the most notable are series of 現行法令輯覽 *Genkō hōrei shūran* and 現行厚生法規總攬 *Genkō kōsei hōki sōran* printed before the WWII which apparently made a long way to the Library considering signs and stamps of many organizations they went through.

Social studies is one of the most diverse group of books, because it touches upon many topics of Japanese society – from the larger general issues to more specific ones like Japanese family issues or and motivational speeches collections for university graduates from Japanese politicians, scientists and artists. This cluster also contains books on Japanese society history and books with overlapping subjects.

History cluster is presented mainly by materials on Japan history in XIX-XX centuries - most notably the books about Pacific War and published diaries of former soldiers. Materials about periods

before Edo period is somewhat underrepresented. Nevertheless, there are two valuable collections of archive materials and documents published by Tokyo University - 大日本古文書 *Dai Nihon komonjo* (173 volumes) and 大日本史料 *Dai Nihon shiryō* (312 volumes). There is also a facsimile edition of 大日本史 *Dai Nihonshi* in 17 volumes printed in 1928.

Art cluster consists of art albums on classical and modern Japanese and foreign art. One of the oldest art albums in the collections was printed in 1908 - 和漢名画選 *Wakan meiga sen*. Other books provide research and analysis of Japanese art, its history and development by Japanese critics. Books about Japanese theater are also can be found in the collection. The LFL also receive annual editions of Tenri Gallery's exhibition brochures.

There are also a collection of Japanese vocabularies, encyclopedias and other referential material. The LFL possess Otsuki Fumihiko's 言海 *Genkai* edition printed in 1925. The edition has stamps of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Consulate-General of Japan in Khabarovsk. There is also a 大言海 *Daigenkai* edition printed in 1956, 大日本百科全書 *Dai Nihon hyakka zensho* (1938), several editions of 広辞苑 *Kojien*, etc.

Serial and periodical publications may be divided in two groups. First one is represented by various academic journals - 人文論集 *Jimbun ronshu*, 早稲田国際経営研究 *Waseda kokusai keiei kenkyū* by Waseda Daigaku, 人文学報 *Jimbungakuho* and 東方学報 *Toho gakuho* by Kyoto Daigaku, 哲学・科学史論叢 *Tetsugaku & Kagaku shi ronso* by Tokyo Daigaku, 文化学年報 *Bunkagaku nempo* by Doshisha Daigaku, 国立国会図書館年報 *Kokuritsu kokkai toshokan nempo* by National Diet Library and many others. Second group consists of famous literary journals like *Shincho*, *Bungakukai*, *Gunzo*, *Bungei* etc.

Most of the books cannot be borrowed home by readers due to their old age, importance to the library collection, rarity in Russia. Only a small segment of books are available – mainly language textbooks and fiction (*bunkobon* editions). Our bookstack is of the closed type. It is located in a separate part of the building and takes seven stories; each is divided in two levels for the easier and safer access. So, readers cannot browse the content of the collection. Some of the books are displayed in the reading hall, but mostly readers have to find what they want in the OPAC or in the card catalogue and then to make an order at the service counter.

Main challenges and Development potential

Currently, the collection is facing a number of specific problems that we are trying to solve. I will describe most pressing issues.

1) Loss of professional continuity. When I came to the Library there was only one person who worked in the last Oriental Literature Sector – my colleague, a Chinese literature cataloguer who is almost eighty years old. She provided me with some valuable information but apart from her there were no one to ask or to consult with. There were no previous specialists' notes, no guidelines, no algorithms of how to work with the collection, no statistics or previously made description of it. All of the further challenges are aftermaths of this global issue. Years of work was lost due to the disbandment of the Department of Oriental Literature.

Possible solution: Right now, I am engaged in multiple activities that can possibly alleviate the situation for those who will come after me. This include the research of the collection history,

further analysis of the collection, creation of the new guidelines for the bibliographical description of the Japanese materials, books, periodical and serial publications in accordance with the new state standards, etc.

2) Slow acquisition rates. In 2020, the library made the first purchase of 72 books in 20 years. However, since then, there were no further acquisition due to the lack of federal funding and the reluctance of the Library's book vendors to take on the eastern book market, which deprive the collection of fresh publications, creating new gaps. Consequently, the library is faced with the task of finding alternative sources of acquisition. Because we have lost mostly all of the connections that the Library previously had, it will be quite a challenge.

Possible solutions: This particular issue is the most complicated. Reactivation of the International Book Exchange is almost impossible at the moment. In addition, federal laws restrict cooperation with small vendors who specializes only on Japan's book market. Taking part in events like this conference may help to make new contacts and to exchange the experience with the colleagues from other libraries from all over the world and find the solution to the existing crisis.

3) Collection "invisibility". As was stated in the abstracts the collection is mostly unknown for the Japanese resource specialists, students and other reader groups. Potential readers go directly to the Japan Foundation reading hall which is placed on the 4th floor of our building with their own collection of 12 000 books. Low demand of the collection leads to low interest in its development and that consequently worsen the problem even more.

Possible solutions: This one is the most important at the moment. Retrospective conversion of the books is in active progress, each month adds at least 150 new books of the collection to the online catalogue making the collection much easier to access. All of the books have updated bibliographic records with small annotations, new authority files, keywords, etc. Right now out of 25,855 documents in Japanese language, 6865 documents can be found in the online catalogue of the Library. When I first came to the Library this number was only slightly more than 1 000. And of course we are trying to promote our Japanese collection through the Library's events, conferences and through the social media.

Thank you for your attention!