

33rd EAJRS Conference: Adapting to Changing Trends in Japanese Studies

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日本研究の時流に適応する

Talk on 16th September 2023

Dr. Ursula Flache: The CrossAsia Open Access Repository and other news from Berlin

CHANGE SLIDE

In my talk today I will combine four short lightning talks featuring news from the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin and our platform CrossAsia.

Number One deals with the extension of our collection of pre-modern Japanese titles with a focus on setsuyōshū as part of our mission as Specialised Information Service Asia and in connection with a research project of the University of Cologne.

The second lightning talk is about the deposit of the “Bandō collection” of the German Institute for Japanese Studies (Tokyo).

The new thematic portal with the presentation of our Japanese handscrolls is the focus of the third talk.

And last but not least I will introduce our new CrossAsia Open Access Repository for Asian studies.

CHANGE SLIDE 2x

Let’s start with the setsuyōshū or rather let me begin with the East Asia Department and our role in the German framework of libraries. We have a current staff of 33 persons and a regional responsibility for China, Japan, Korea, Central Asia, Southeast Asia.

From 1951 to 2015 we were in charge of a so called Sondersammelgebiet, a Special Subject Collection for East and Southeast Asia with a focus on humanities and social sciences about and from these regions. It was funded by the German Research Foundation. Then the German Research Foundation changed the system to the Fachinformationsdienste, in short FID. The English translation is Specialised Information Services and since January 2016 we are responsible for the FID Asia.

CHANGE SLIDE

Our mission as FID is to supply access to relevant resources in printed and electronic format to researchers of Asian studies located at German universities or research institutions. The focus comprises now the humanities, social sciences plus economics.

Our work is guided by two principles: electronic resources are preferred whenever possible and a close contact to our research community so that we can respond to its needs.

With regard to the latter principle the FID has a scientific advisory board, we participate in the annual conferences of our research community, we do regular user trainings through the CrossAsia Classroom and we acquire materials according to user requests.

CHANGE SLIDE

Now, at the University of Cologne Prof. Stephan Köhn is conducting a research project with the title "The revision of knowledge: on the genesis of "national language dictionaries" (kokugo jisho) and the commercialisation of "knowledge" in 17th and 18th century Ōsaka". It is funded by the German Research Foundation and the main focus of this research project is a special type of dictionary that became very popular in Japan, the setsuyōshū. To be exact Prof. Köhn chose an otoko and an onna setsuyōshū for his study.

You can read more about this project on the websites introduced on the slide.

CHANGE SLIDE

What is of interest for you, is the result of this research project. Prof. Köhn has not only published an annotated edition of the setsuyōshū in print form, but has also set up an open access database offering the complete vocabulary of two setsuyōshū with German and English translations plus extensive background information, a glossary and a bibliography.

CHANGE SLIDE

As FID Asia we were approached by Prof. Köhn in 2019 with respect to our setsuyōshū collection. We had a few dictionaries of this type in our pre-modern collection, but as part of our patron-driven-acquisition service we extended the collection to currently 77 titles according to Prof. Köhn's requests and depending certainly on what was available on the market. Some titles were also purchased in various editions, as Prof. Köhn plans to extend this research project.

CHANGE SLIDE

As part of our digitization on demand service 13 selected titles were also made available in digital format thanks to funding by the German research foundation. Please explore our OPAC and the digital collections of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, if you are looking for setsuyōshū titles. We have much to offer in this field.

CHANGE SLIDE 2x

Now I would like to turn to the topic of the Bandō collection.

Many of you will probably know the German Institute for Japanese Studies in Tokyo. The Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien, in short the DIJ. This research institute is funded by the German state and consists of a dozen researchers plus administration and a small library. I used to work there in the library for four years from 2003-2006 together with a Japanese colleague. The focus of the collection was German works about Japan and certainly the library also supplied materials according to the needs of the researchers.

CHANGE SLIDE

The DIJ library also held one collection of rare materials the so called Bandō collection. It consists of materials related to the POW camp Bandō in which about 1000 Germans were held captive during WW1 between 1917 to 1920. The collection was originally acquired for the research of a PhD candidate, but due to personal reasons this PhD thesis was never written.

Bandō is located on Shikoku and belongs today to the city of Naruto. Thanks to the humane attitude of the head of the camp and the efficient self-organization of the prisoners themselves, Bandō became a very amazing POW camp. It had a variety of shops and small enterprises, the prisoners tended to allotment gardens, they engaged in sports and cultural activities. And thanks to a very active printing press, we have newspapers, magazines, posters and pamphlets that tell us a lot about the life in Bandō.

CHANGE SLIDE

The system administrator of the DIJ, Claus Harmer suggested to digitize the whole collection and put it on the internet. I agreed to this undertaking and wrote extensively about the materials and the camp. The release of the "Virtual exhibition and catalogue of the Bandō collection" was one event of the DIJ in the so called "Germany in Japan Year" in 2005/2006.

The website which is available in German and Japanese is still online. I reported in more detail about this project in my talk during the EAJRS 2009 in Norwich.

However, as a research institute the DIJ has no special storage with appropriate air-conditioned rooms for rare materials, so they were looking for an institution where the Bandō collection could find shelter with better conditions. I learned about this search and suggested Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin as new home for the collection. We are very happy that we could secure this material.

CHANGE SLIDE

At the very end of 2021 the collection arrived in Berlin as a new deposit. It is now stored in our section for rare materials. We have acquired new boxes for preserving the collection. Currently we are updating and enhancing the very short and simple catalogue records of the DIJ period to the current standards.

CHANGE SLIDE

We will also redigitize the whole collection with the current technology, as the system of the DIJ period has its limitations. And also the virtual exhibition will be transferred to the system of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin

CHANGE SLIDE

With the Corona pandemic I remembered that the Bandō prisoners experienced the great influenza epidemic that spread globally from 1918 to 1920. The development of the epidemic in the camp can be traced very easily in the camp's publications. There was the daily newspaper, the "Täglicher Telegrammdienst Bando" and the weekly magazine "Die Baracke". Both contain articles and references to the epidemic. The statistics published in "Die Baracke" report the first 8 patients for the 9th November 1918. The peak was reached on the 21st November with 324 ill persons. After that, the curve flattened out with only 52 sick persons on the 2nd December.

The measures they took resemble very much to what we just experienced during the Corona pandemic.

Recommendations were published on how to try to prevent the infection. Instructions were given on how to behave in case of illness. Certainly there were those who did not take the situation seriously and who were reprimanded for putting others at risk. Expert knowledge was published in the form of an article about influenza by the head of the then Virchow hospital, Leopold Kuttner, which is today the Charite hospital in Berlin. With the rising number of patients thermometers became scarce and a call was published to aid by contributing thermometers. In addition the camp's health service was in need for eggs to enhance the nutrition of the sick. After the end of the epidemic a fund raising campaign was held in the camp in order to cover the costs for the extra food. An article was published in which words of gratitude were expressed to the volunteers and the head of the camp who all had helped together in the time of crisis. Despite the large number of prisoners only three of them died due to influenza. For comparison in the camp in Nagoya with only 600 prisoners of war there were 6 victims of the epidemic.

A comment in the magazine "Die Baracke" reminded me very much of the situation during the lockdown period: QUOTE

"What changes the disease had brought about in our daily lives! The whole camp seemed to be deserted. Those who had not fallen ill, had fallen into idleness, for arts and science, together with sport, were in premature hibernation. [...] Orchestras, choirs and theatre groups had stopped rehearsing. Some prisoners of war finally had time on their hands for the first time in four years." (Die Baracke. No. 9 (61[richtig: 62]) 1. Dez 1918, p. 193, 194-195)

END OF QUOTE

CHANGE SLIDE

Now, I would like to turn to my third lightning talk, the presentation of our Japanese handscrolls in a new thematic portal

CHANGE SLIDE

Among the resources on the CrossAsia website we offer the so-called thematic portals in which we introduce segments of our collections selected by region, by their history, by donor, by type of material... etc.

Pertaining to Japan so far we had a portal about the origin of the Japanese collection, about the Prussian Expedition in Japan 1860/61 and about the Collection donated by Otsuka Kinnosuke. Now, you can find a new thematic portal, that presents our Japanese handscrolls in a way that is more befitting to their material character.

CHANGE SLIDE

Let me begin with a short historical overview.

The first Japanese handscrolls in our collections date back to the Prussian Expedition to East Asia in 1860/61 that I just mentioned. The members of the expedition acquired books and other materials on official behalf of the then Royal Library of the Prussian king or sold privately purchased items later to the library. Among the scrolls are many elaborately crafted, valuable pieces, mostly narrative scrolls with illustrations whose text passages are often decorated with underpaintings in gold or silver ink.

Currently we organize the CrossAsia Talks, a lecture series that is dealing with selected items of our collections. If you want to know more about reproductions of Hachiman handscrolls in general and in particular about the one in our collection, please check out the recording of the talk by Mr. Wang Fengyu of Heidelberg University with the title “The karmic Origins painted anew”.

CHANGE SLIDE

Additional scrolls came into the library much later in 1980 through the generous donation of 13 Japanese printed works dating from the 8th to the early 17th centuries by a Japanese donor. This donation includes 4 titles in 6 scrolls. They are text-only works of Buddhist content produced in temple workshops. They are examples of the early print culture in Japan.

CHANGE SLIDE

Only a few years later, in 1983, a larger number of handscrolls together with other parts of the collection of the painter and Japanologist Fritz Rumpf (1888-1949) came into the library. The scrolls mainly date from the second half of the Edo-period (1600-1868) and depict a wide range of subjects and production techniques ranging from relatively simple workshop or working copies of famous items to hand-coloured prints.

CHANGE SLIDE

A few handscrolls are to be found in other departments of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, such as the map department or the oriental department. And also today on rare occasions we have the opportunity to acquire new items. For example the depiction of the mining and minting process on the Sado island was purchased in 2018.

CHANGE SLIDE

Many of you will remember the talk of my colleague Mr. Dunkel at last year’s EAJRS. He gave a work in progress report about the technical details of the thematic portal. If you want to know more, please check out the recording of his talk on the EAJRS website.

On the slide you also find the direct link to the thematic portal of the Japanese handscrolls. Due to time restrictions I will not go the website itself now, but I want to invite you to explore for yourselves.

CHANGE SLIDE

In the general digital collection of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin the scrolls are presented as single scans of segments, whereas in the new thematic portal the scans are combined on a virtual canvas with the help of IIIF technology and an adequate viewer. It takes a moment for the viewer to load and assemble the images, but in this way a seamless scrolling through the whole scroll is possible.

CHANGE SLIDE

And now for my last lightning talk about the new CrossAsia Open Access Repository.

CHANGE SLIDE

The website of it is online since summer 2022 as our e-publishing service.

CHANGE SLIDE

With regard to science policy in Germany we see a clear trend to initiatives that aim at promoting and increasing the acceptance of the open access paradigm.

The German Research Foundation has intensified their funding programs for open access. Also the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation (Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (SPK)) to which Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin belongs has adopted its own Open Science Declaration in November 2021 in addition to earlier affirmations since 2013.

CHANGE SLIDE

As FID Asia we aim for an attractive specialised repository in order to promote open access in the Asia-related studies. The repository is explicitly meant as a low-threshold offer for self-archiving or publication. Certainly we guarantee reliable and long-term secure hosting, a persistent identifier through DOI assignment, good visibility via union catalogues (national, international), search engines, a good bibliographic description including norm data through links to the German Integrated Authority File (GND). We also think that the prominent visibility in the CrossAsia context is an advantage. We are very happy that the repository has been accepted by the German Research Foundation and is recommended by it as publication platform in the field of Asian studies

CHANGE SLIDE

With regard to the technology used, the technical basis is Repositis - repository service of the Head Office of the Common Library Network in Germany (Verbundzentrale des Gemeinsamen Bibliotheksverbunds (GBV/VZG)). It is based on the software framework MyCoRe. So is not a new development, but various FIDs use the Repositis system. Long-term archiving is achieved through cooperation with the German National Library (Deutsche Nationalbibliothek (DNB))

CHANGE SLIDE

With regard to the procedure, a registration with CrossAsia is necessary, then the author can enter the bibliographic data, keywords, notation(s), abstract(s) and upload the files. Certainly the author must conclude a publication contract with us. Then we check the data and the contract. Usually there is a short exchange with the author by adding some more keywords or links to the integrated authority file. And when everything is ok the DOI is assigned and the new publication is released on the website.

CHANGE SLIDE

Concerning the scope of the repository we will accept research from all fields of social sciences and humanities related to Asia. The academic quality is based on the affiliation of the author with a university or research institution or on the scientific reputation of the original publication. BA and MA theses will only be accepted in exceptional cases and only based on written reviews by teaching staff or supervisors.

CHANGE SLIDE

Concerning the formal scope we will accept gold open access as well as green open access. Therefore original works and secondary publications are welcome. We are open for monographs, articles,

conference papers, blogposts etc. The repository can also handle research data or audio or visual files. So this is a very broad scope.

CHANGE SLIDE

I would like to conclude my talk with a screenshot of my own Phd thesis. It had already been available in open access in the repository of Tübingen University. But I republished it in the CrossAsia repository in August last year. As an author I am quite happy with 38 downloads since it was made available. I don't think I would have sold so many paper copies.

So please spread the word, we are always happy about new publications and we hope that the new repository will be of benefit for Asian studies.

CHANGE SLIDE

So, this is it. Thank you for your attention. I am looking forward to your questions.