

Preservation of Japanese old books in Europe: Survey results and some remarks

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EAJRS Preservation survey 2014

- 26 responses including some from outside of Europe and some with 'no Japanese old book collection' answers.
- I talk today based on the 20 responses from European institutions that have 'Japanese old book collection'.

Vocabulary

Definitions:

- Preservation
- Conservation
- Restoration

6 Points I will discuss

- 1 Importance of assessment
- 2 Importance of planning
- 3 Importance of prevention
- 4 Conservation, and not restoration
- 5 Preservation and access
- 6 Needs of cooperation

Point 1: Importance of assessment

What to assess?:

- What you have, where they are, how they are kept.
- Is there their inventory and/or catalogue ?
- How about their use ?
- Were they microfilmed or digitized?
- Were they repaired/boxed in the past?
- Current preservation program

Your responses

- About collection
7 answered needs of inventory works. (Q.7)
- About the environment of your collection
6 answered improvement of storage and/or environmental control is needed. (Q.7)

Your response (cont.)

- About the condition of your collection
9 answered 'good' and 8 'fair' while 2 'bad'. (Q2)
- It is essential to understand the condition of our collection.
- 10 have done conservation surveys. Most of them were carried out in recent years. (Q4)
- This reflects the growing understanding of collection preservation management.
- The question is what should come next,

Point 2: Importance of planning

- General management cycle : PDCA (plan-do-check-action)
- Simpler one is : plan-do-see
- In preservation: Assess-plan-do-see

Assessment and planning

- 8 have preservation plans while 11 have not (Q4) . And 9 mentioned lack of budget and 11 lack of staff time. (Q5)
- Preservation assessment will enable you to see preservation needs and to set up their priorities. While preservation planning enables you to allocate staff time and budget according to the needs and the priorities, they can also facilitate to obtain internal and external funding.
- Cases of microfilm masters survey in Japan

- Disaster plan

11 have disaster plans and 8 have not.

- Disaster plan is the 'must' for any cultural resource institutions. Therefore think of its planning if you have not.

- Institutions who have not preservation plan can learn from ones who have them.
- Institutions who have preservation plans also can learn from others to see if one's plan is working all right.
- Share your preservation knowledge and experience among the EAJRS members.

Point 3: Importance of prevention

‘Prevention first!’ is the maxim. And in this regard, I will explain:

- Development of phase conservation program in US
- Storage condition of Shosoin (東大寺正倉院)

Prevention and protection

- There were some who answered the needs of improvement of storage and environmental control.
- However it is costly matter.
- But improvement of micro-environment (protective enclosures) is not so costly.

Your responses on protective enclosures

- Some of you have done boxing and re-housing projects (Q5)

“Protective boxing with acid-free cardboard”

“Reboxing of 1000 itens done since 2005”

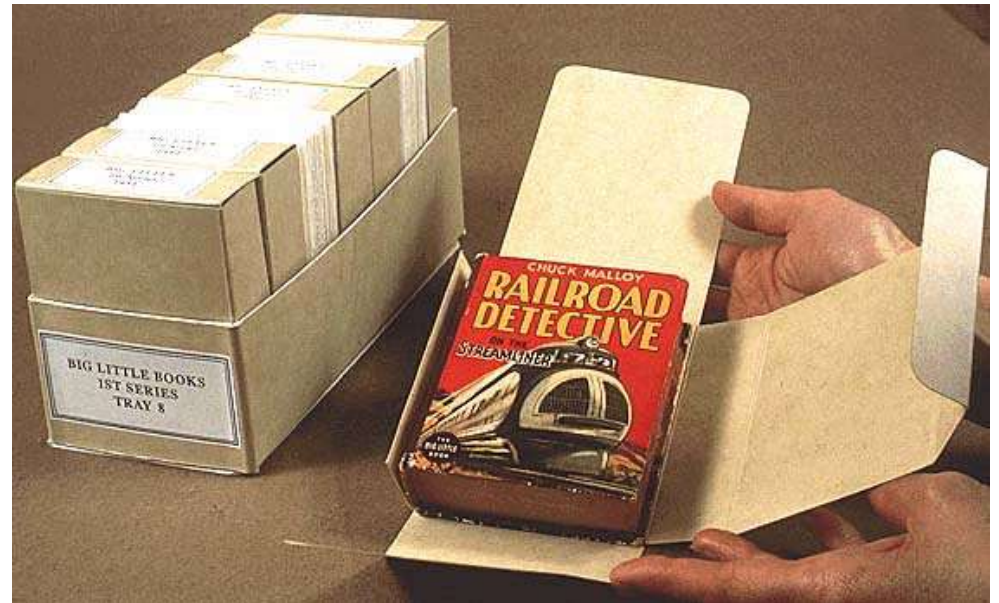
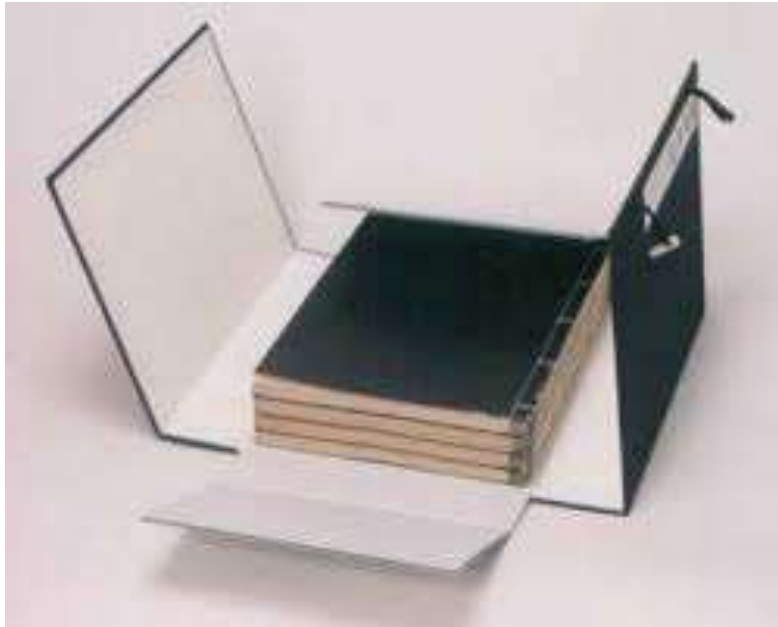
“Repair and reshousing of 2 albums of surimoto prints etc.”

- And 5 answered the need of ‘protective enclosures’ (Q6).

Phase(d) conservation

- Phase conservation program was first developed at the Library of Congress in 1970 by Waters, Etherington and Clarkson.
- First phase: Use of protective enclosures to prevent further damage to cope with massive deteriorating collections
- Second phase: Repair/restoration of most valuable or of most urgently repair-needed items

The idea of protective enclosures came from Japanese 四方帙



First phase boxes made at the Library of Congress



資料保存器材HPより

A comment in your responses. “We have difficulty to obtain 帙 for Japanese books in Europe.”

- Think the function of 帙, and not its appearance or design.
- Ordinary acid-free board boxes do good for Japanese old books.

Shosoin case as a good example of micro-environment



Azekura style log house (校倉造り) Secrecy of good storage / Yes, however.

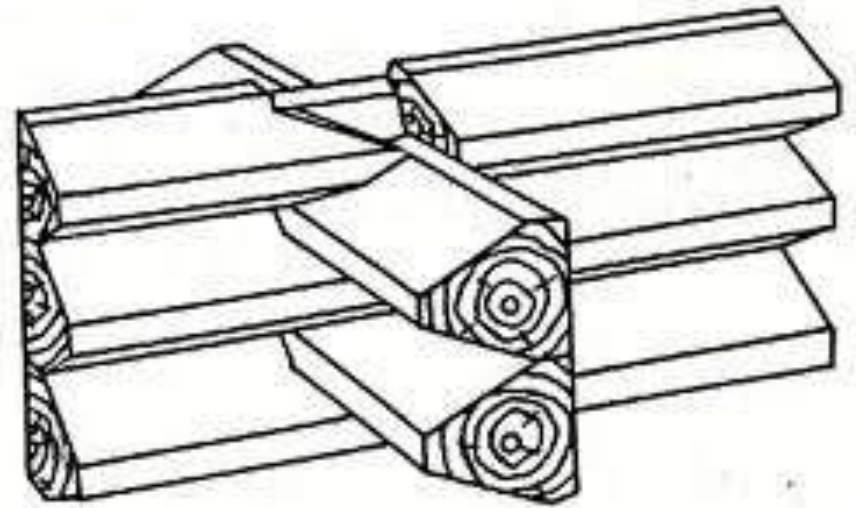


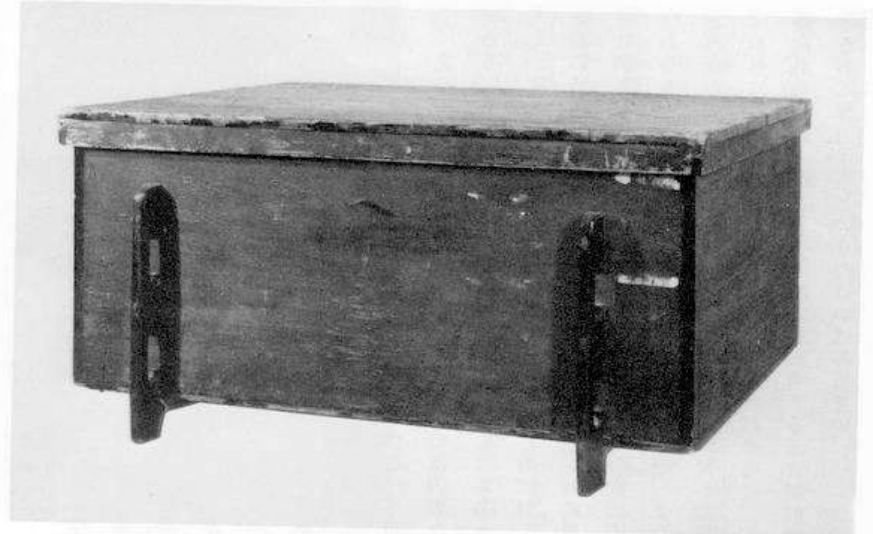
図-3 校倉の構造

Wooden chests (櫃)



43-44 倉庫正倉

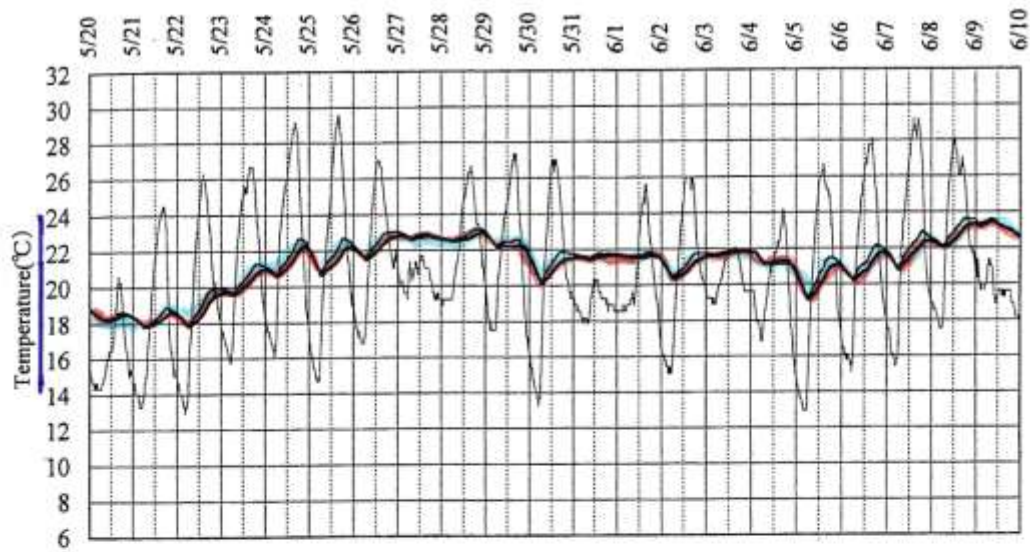
杉材 Japan cedar



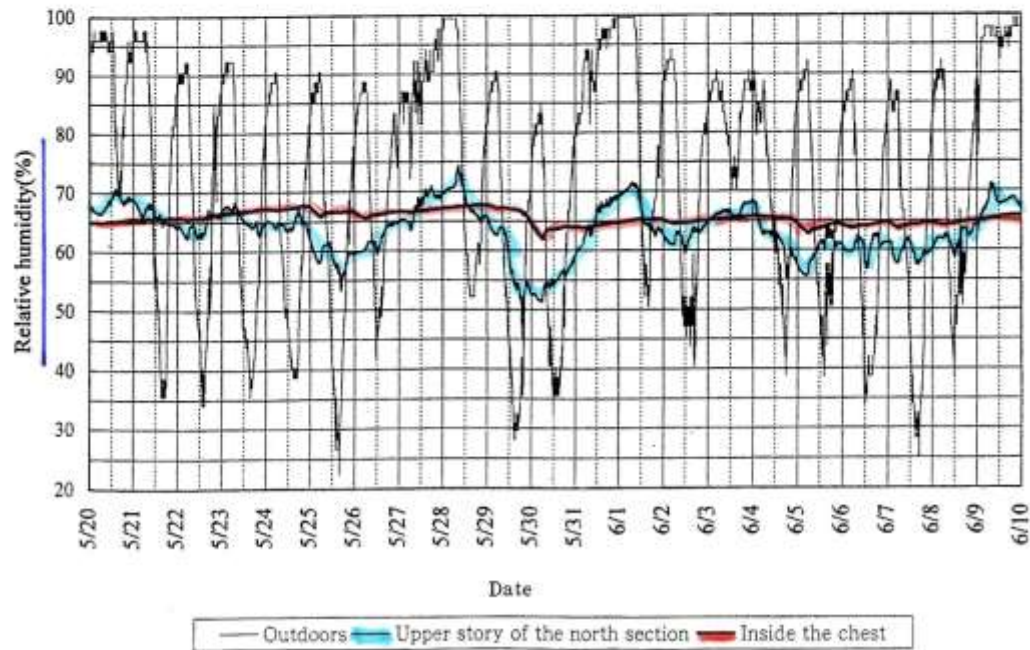
5 唐櫃



6 和櫃



Monitoring of Tem.
and RH in wooden
chests at Shosoin



成瀬正和「正倉の温湿度環境調査」『正倉院紀要』23号,2001.

Fig. 1b Temperature and relative humidity variations, from May 20 to June 9, 2000

An example of Shosoin monjo : Gakkiron written by Empress Komyo (光明皇后) in 744

樂毅論
夏侯泰初
世人以樂毅不時拔管即墨為劣是以叙而論之
夫求古賢之意宜以大者遠者先之必迂迴而難通然後已焉可也今樂氏之趣或者其未盡乎而多劣之是使前賢失指於將來不亦惜哉觀樂生遺燕惠王書其始庶乎機合乎道以終始者與其喻昭王曰伊尹放大甲而不疑大甲受放而不怨是存大業於至公而以天下為心者也夫厥極道之量務以天下為心者必致其主於盛隆合其趣於先王苟君臣同符斯大業定矣于斯時也樂生之志千載一遇也亦將行千載一隆之道登其局蹟當時心於兼并而已哉夫兼并者非樂生之所屑疆燕而廢道又非樂生之所求

- From what we learn from the Shosoin case
- Protective enclosures with suitable materials work well for document conservation.
- They should not be regarded as the first phase practice.
- They are simple but should be understood as ultimate conservation measures.
- This point would become still clearer with the next topic

Point 4: Conservation, and not restoration

William Blades in his book "Enemies of books" (1891) included bookbinder



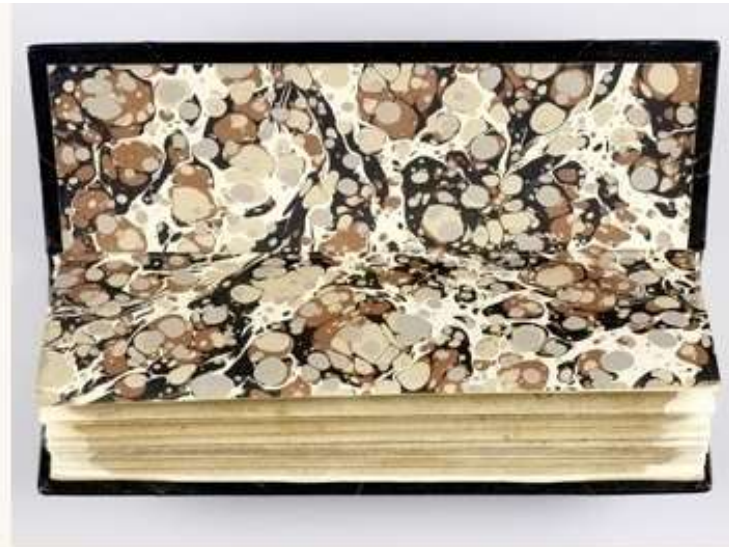
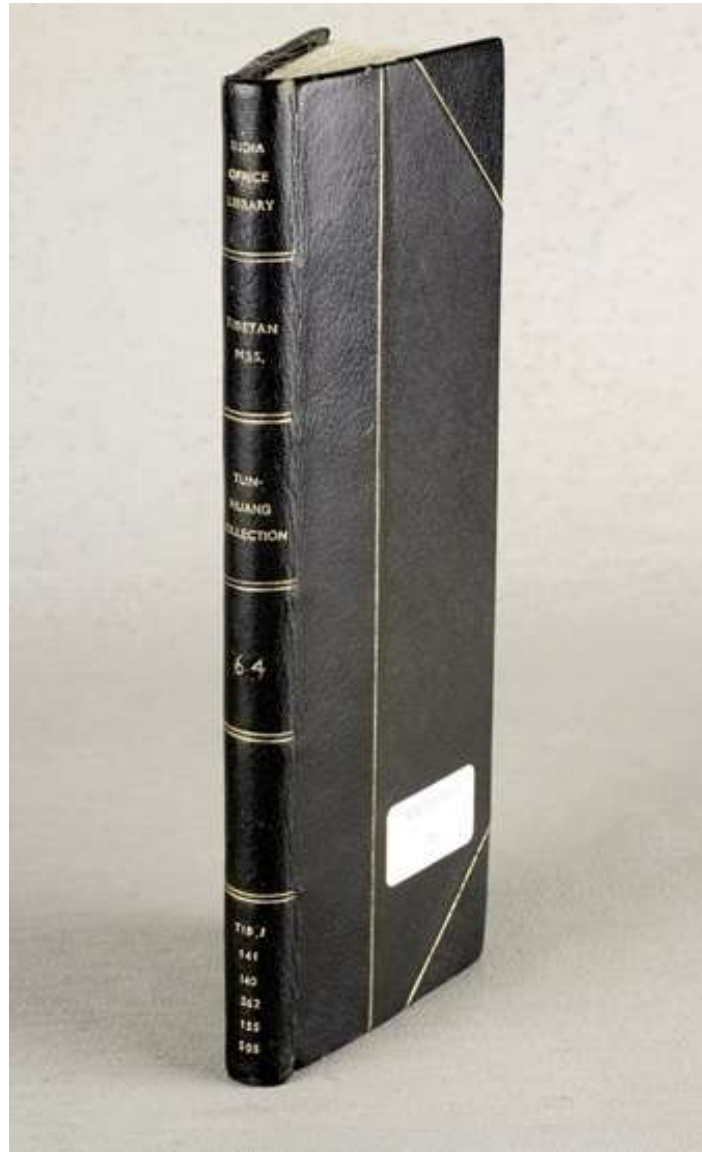
- We sometime hear 'not proper' restoration done to Japanese books in the past in Europe. Koyama-san would speak about the Cambridge Univ. Library case in the next session.
- Similar restoration was done to the Dunhuang manuscripts in Europe.

Tibetan pothi manuscripts from Dunhuang Mogao Cave



Stein Collection at the British Library: photo around 1910

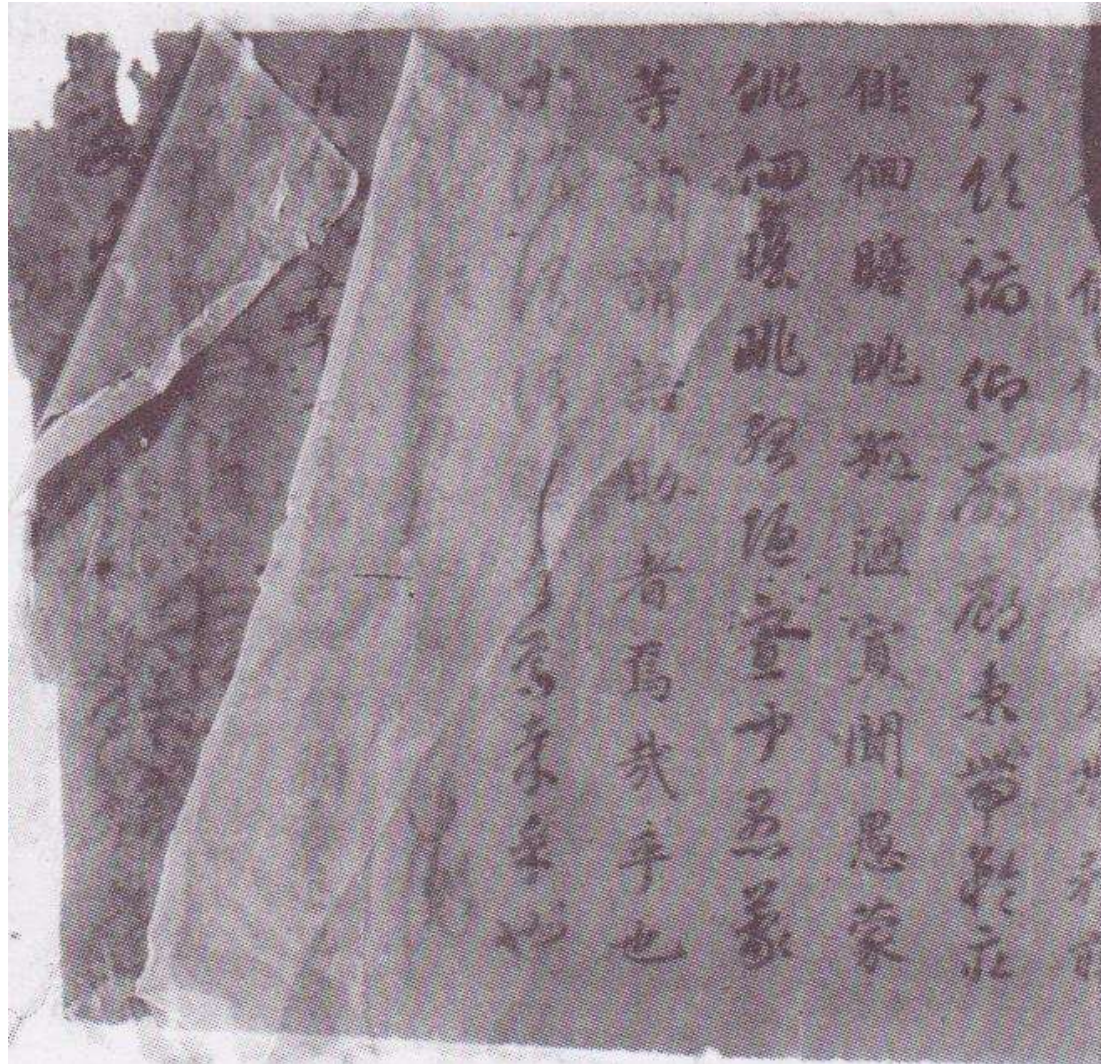
They were restored and bound after the WWII



De-restoration was done and now they are protected with acid-free paper and cardboard



De-restoration of lamination for Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang (Pelliot Collection, Bnf)



IFLA Principles of Conservation and Restoration in Libraries (1978)

- “Restoration should never be undertaken unless it is unavoidable.”
- And when restoration is unavoidable, in order to maintain originality of documents, “ apply most appropriate technique, use safe conservation materials, consider reversibility of the treatment and write treatment records.”

Progress of conservation: In UK

- BS 4971:2002 (Repair and allied processes for the conservation of documents-recommendations) says,
“Minimum intervention should be used to support and stabilize items to ensure preservation of the integrity of the document and to minimize the risk of further damage during treatment. ▪ ▪ ▪ Treatment to prolong the life of an archival document is distinct from the process of restoration.”

In US

- Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler (NARA conservator) in her *Preserving Archives & manuscripts (3rd edition, 2010)* says,
- “The term *restoration* has a somewhat archaic ring to preservation, bringing to mind workshops perhaps more concerned with cosmetic improvement than with stabilization. Indeed, it is not commonly used term today. *Conservation* has replaced *restoration*”

Diamond Sutra of 868, the world's oldest dated printed document (Stein collection, BL)



Photo: 1912

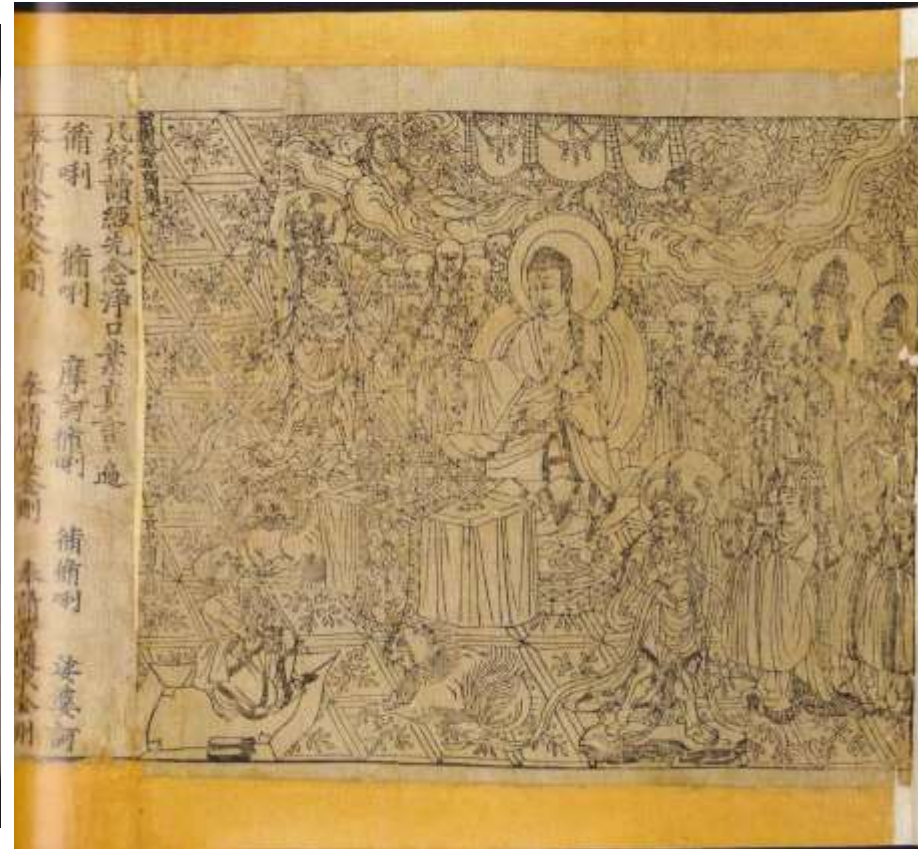


Photo: 1978

New lining caused creases and splits



Fig. 9 Examples of Alf Crowley's conservation.

In the 1960s Alf Crowley, a conservator in the British Museum, worked on over a thousand Stein fragments rolling them into tight manilla scrolls secured with tape.



Fig. 10 Fragments mounted as scrolls.

In the mid-1970s many of the remaining, unconserved Stein fragments were mounted together in series on scrolls with a wooden roller.



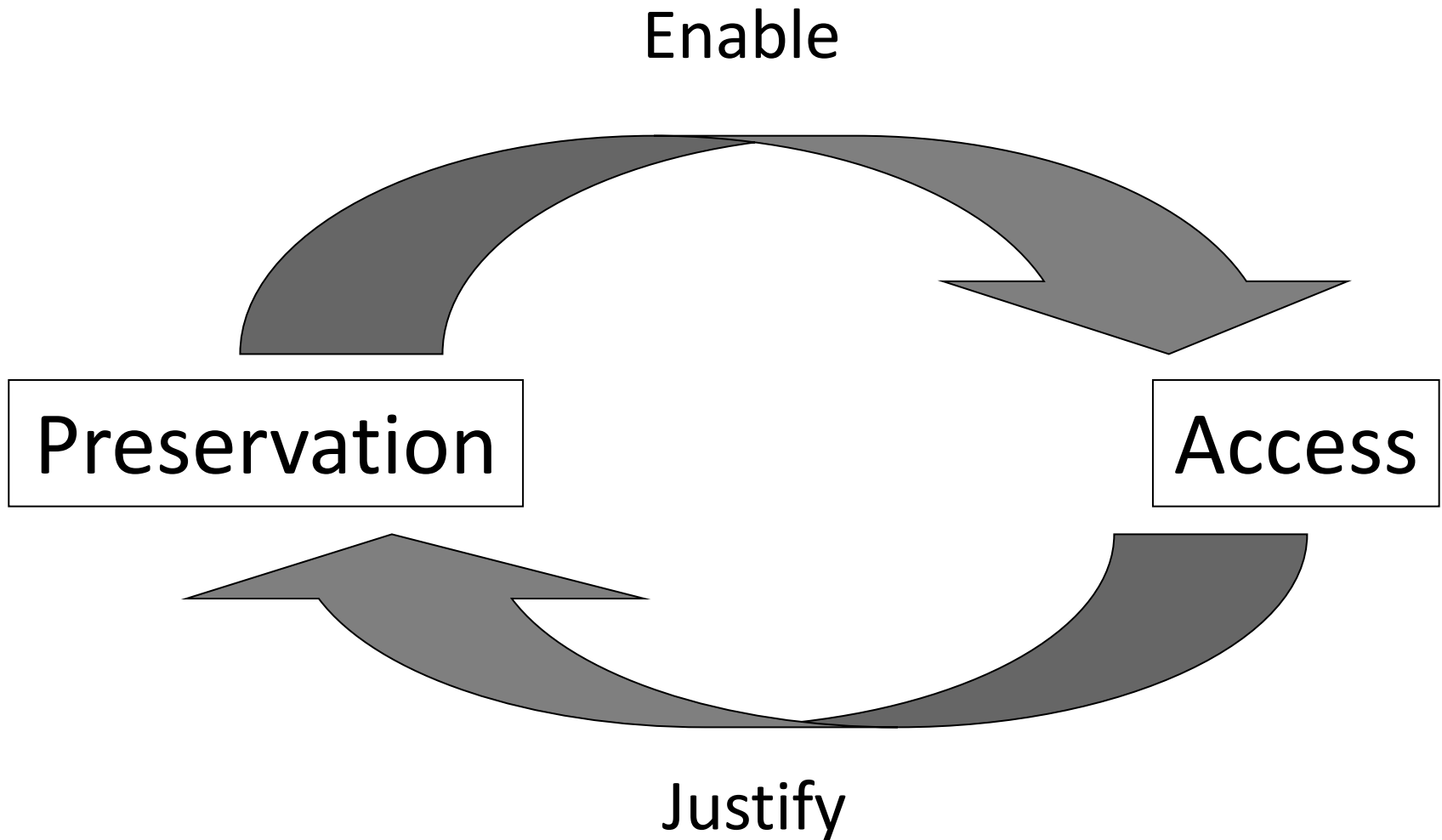
Fig. 4 Vertical creases have a tendency to form the closer the panels are to the inner core of the scroll. Damage through repeated use can weaken the paper, which in turn may lead to vertical splitting.

Point 5: Preservation and access

- Preservation is to ensure accessibility of your collection at present as well as in the future.

Relation between preservation and access

Cf: Barclay Ogden (UC Berkley Library)



Your responses about use

- How about usage of your collections?
6 responded 'medium' while 9 'low' and 3 'none', 1 other (personal use only). (Q3)
- Preservation is for use and how to make hidden collection unhidden while conserving originals is the important preservation subject.
- Let's think of digitization.

Your responses about digitization

- 12 responded digitization as necessary preservation measures. (Q7)
- And 12 hope to digitize their collections (Q8).
Such items as 奈良絵本、貴重書、版画、写本、地図、錦絵等

- Digitization will do much for the improvement of access of Japanese old books and also for their conservation.
- One of your comment is: 'We have been digitizing our collection of pre-modern Japanese books. Simultaneously we have made condition records of the books and also changed/renewed storage boxes etc.'

- Good practice of the improvement of access and of the conservation of originals.
- We should be in full pursuit of the digitization of the Japanese old books for their conservation and access.
- However digitization is costly, and in many cases, Japanese old books in Europe are not of high priority for digitization in each institution.
- Therefore, cooperation for digitization should be considered and sought.

Point 6: Needs of cooperation

2 areas of cooperation for preservation in Europe.

1. Communication and cooperation among EAJRS members

- Your responses; 10 want preservation/conservation advice.(Q9) 8 answered the hope of preservation seminars in Europe. (Q9)
- There was a suggestion of possible expansion of OJAMASG (在外日本古典籍研究会) for conservation issue.

In EAJRS

Sharing preservation knowledge and experience; condition survey, preservation planning, disaster plan, repair, boxing, digitization etc.

/Use of EAJRS homepage and OJAMASG for preservation; mailing list, directory of conservation experts and suppliers, reference tools, preservation manuals, etc.

Organizing preservation conservation seminars/workshops in the EAJRS framework

2. Cooperation with Japanese partners

Your related responses: 6 wanted cooperation on digitization, 6 training of conservation staff in Japan, 8 funding for digitization. (Q9)

- There are partners in Japan who can work with you on these subjects.
- You can ask cooperation to Japanese partners individually. However it would be more effective if you do it together, for example in a country or cross countries, or as a group such as EAJRS.

Your important comments

- ‘A support from Japan would be beneficial for Japanese counterparts as it would contribute for the conservation of Japanese cultural assets and for the access improvement of Japanese collections via Internet.’
- ‘Exchange of conservators between European and Japanese institutions would be beneficial to both sides.’
- EAJRS Conference as good occasion of communication and cooperation

In summary

- Assessment and planning ; keys for preservation
- ‘Prevention first’ and ‘do not restore’ practices.
- Preservation is for continual use.
- Seek cooperation whenever necessary and wherever possible.

“Think globally, act locally”.

In preservation,

“Think future, act now”.

Thank you for your kind attention.