

How to make uncatalogued Japanese collections accessible: about a collection in Copenhagen

日本関連資料の死蔵を防ぐ —— 在コペンハーゲン資料をめぐって

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[How to make uncatalogued Japanese collections accessible \(Part 1\)](#)

Introduction

Hello. I am Mayumi Tsuda from Keio University. I am happy to be able to come back here again.

I will talk alongside Merete Pedersen, former librarian at the University of Copenhagen, with whom I made the Catalogue of Japanese Prints and Illustrated Books in the National Gallery of Denmark.

The catalogue appeared in Japanese and English in the journal *Keio University Hiyoshi Review of the Humanities* in June 2018, which is available in paper and on the web.

<http://jairo.nii.ac.jp/0050/00065379/en>

I have handed out copies of the catalogue that I brought with me from Tokyo. You can also download the PDF from the information given on my small hand-out.

The reason we are giving a presentation together is because, following the last conference in Oslo, we found we had a common experience in Copenhagen. That is: there are more and more staff attached to institutions holding Japanese material who do not understand the Japanese language. Today we would like to consider what can be done to help Japanese scholars making catalogues in an international environment.

Today's Agenda (slide 2)

And this is the outline for our talk.

My part will trace the background of our small project, and introduce our trial catalogue. In Ms Pedersen's part, she will talk in terms of her own experience in publishing her reference book of the Japanese rare book and manuscript holdings at the Royal Library.

Considering what is important for creating "internationally" useful catalogues (slide 3)

This is today's objective.

Many catalogues of Japanese rare books have been created to date, but from now on Japanese material will undergo a new form of cataloguing that enables internationalisation.

Most scholars in Japan, however, do not know about such issues. They are unaware how for example Romanisation can cause so many problems. Most likely, Japanese scholars, given the task of creating an international catalogue, would model it on the well-known catalogues dating from the 1990s and early 2000s.

I do not intend to criticise the great catalogue masterpieces that my elders have created. Books reflect the criteria of the author and the needs of the era. They are designed to meet those aims.

But now we see large changes in the times, the medium, users and objectives. Catalogues that scholars create as a result of research must also change. What should we do to pursue internationalisation? The truth is that many Japanese scholars have no idea what is required. I'd like to hear as many of your views as possible on this. This is actually why I am here today.

Nihon kinsei bungakukai (slide 4)

From August, this year I was made Chair of Nihon Kinsei Bungaku Kai (The Association for the Study of Japanese Early Modern Literature) that researches the Japanese rare books produced in the pre-modern period of the kind found in great numbers at libraries in the West. There are many members who have created catalogues as a result of research abroad.

Nihon Kinsei Bungaku Kai also has a role as the network hub for other Japanese literature-related groups.

My tenure as Chair is for two years. If there is anything Japanese scholars should know when sharing "international" information, please talk to me. <http://www.kinseibungakukai.com/>

The National Gallery of Denmark Catalogue (slide 5)

Please refer to the catalogue if you have it.

I decided to create this catalogue following two events that happened at last year's conference in Oslo.

The first was during our visit to the National Gallery of Norway. The Curator Trine Nordkvelle said "It's all very well Japanese scholars making lists and catalogues of Japanese prints, but they are only written in Japanese!" I think, however, that the professors did not make a list only in Japanese to be unkind; in their experience this was just enough.

The second event was when I went to Copenhagen on my way back from Oslo. I was shown the University Library by Merete. On this occasion, I heard that there would probably in the near future be no one at the main libraries, museums and galleries in Copenhagen who could read Japanese.

I then visited the National Gallery of Denmark to see its Ukiyo-e and rare books, but apart from some old notes, the person in charge of the collection did not know what they had. The original aim of my visit was to find surimono prints, but for this I had to have all the material brought out. Then I decided to make an annotated catalogue of the whole collection.

Outline of the National Gallery of Denmark Collection (slide 6)

Let's move on to an overview of the collection. This is the extent of Japan-related material in the National Gallery of Denmark.

There are 49 woodblock prints, mostly Ukiyoe, with 3 Chinese prints. There are 15 woodblock printed books (comprising 10 titles). There is also one set of Ukiyo-e printing sample sheets that consists of 15 sheets.

The Ukiyo-e are said to have been purchased in 1949 from the Oriental art historian Gustav Lorenzen.

A large part of the woodblock printed books are picture copy books mostly by Hokusai.

Notes (slides 7-8)

What I found of most interest were the Danish notes left with the material.

There are 9 sheets of handwritten and typed notes.

The curator said they were notes by former owner Lorenzen, but this did not seem to be entirely the case. By discerning different handwriting, historical Danish spelling and from the content, we solved the mystery. The notes were by Lorenzen and another specialist Karl Berger, and probably gallery staff of the time.

Page 182 onwards provides a transcription of the Danish notes with English translation. There is also a commentary on the notes.

These notes reveal keen powers of observation regarding the collection by the Copenhagen specialists, and the enthusiasm of gallery staff.

Tō bijin (slide 9)

For example, take a look at the second Ukiyo-e on page 135: 457a-1 Tō bijin (Chinese Beauty).

This picture is drawn in Chinese style, with no artist signature. The handwritten list gives Tachibana Morikuni, yet it is not in his style. An addition to the notes, however, tells us that Lorenzen found it in the book entitled "Hiroshige" by Uchida Minoru. Indeed, a very small image appears in this book of 1932. I admire Lorenzen for finding it.

Hand-drawn maps (slides 10–11)

Pages 194 to 196 of the catalogue: of the 9 pages of notes, we think these were compiled by Gustav Lorenzen.

See on page 194: Hiroshige's signature and "Aratame-in" Censor's seal used on Ukiyo-e post-Tenpo Reforms of 1842. Pages 195 and 196 have two hand-drawn maps of the Tokaido road.

These must have been reproduced to help understand the many Ukiyo-e by Hiroshige.

Karl Berger's notes (slide 12)

Page 202: Notes left by Karl Berger in August 1952 offer help to understand the actor prints. He was a consultant at what is now called Design Museum Denmark. He has copied actors' crests in detail, and provides explanation for understanding Actor prints. These notes are evidence that there were once people in Copenhagen who understood much about Japanese art.

Our Catalogue: Ukiyo-e Japanese Prints (slides 13–16)

We tried to make our catalogue useful for people without knowledge of the Japanese language.

Firstly, Romanisation. We used the library of Congress romanisation format and word division, so that non-Japanese readers could look it up.

However, I realise I made a mistake! I should have included the Furigana Japanese readings in the titles. This would have shown more consideration for Japanese people or Japanese speakers who do not like to use this Romanisation system.

I then listed information necessary for exhibiting Ukiyo-e. From numbers 1–7: Title, Dimensions, Format, Artist, Publisher, Date, Place of Publication, Notes. The English translation of the title is included in the English explanation found in 7) Notes.

Shortly before starting this catalogue, I arranged a panel exhibition in both Japanese and English of Ukiyo-e prints by Kuniyoshi at Keio University with the help of Iwakiri Yuriko, a researcher of Ukiyo-e, who has much experience in cataloguing Ukiyo-e overseas. The highly successful exhibition “Fantastique! Kuniyoshi” at Le Petit Palais in Paris was based on Iwakiri Yuriko’s work. I have borrowed the format that I used when making 12 of the panels for the exhibition at Keio University (slides 15–16).

Our Catalogue: Japanese Rare Books (slides 17–19)

Next come the Japanese books.

Headings are similar to Ukiyo-e, but the English explanation has been shortened. My thinking was that information required by research specialists on Japan is not needed by those who do not understand the Japanese language.

Information sought by scholars includes title, author, date of publication etc., but also the condition of a book, and in the case of printed books, the edition. This information is necessary in order to know whether the book is worth viewing.

For this reason, I included, in Japanese, the information necessary for identifying different editions. As you well know, different editions can be identified from covers and frontispieces, final colophons and publishers’ advertisements.

All of this may be redundant if the entire book is digitized, but not so in a catalogue. Also, this catalogue is available on the web through my university bulletin, so I decided to include written information for internet searches.

If you try searching the Ukiyo-e “457a-1” with “Hiroshige Tō bijin Kokon meihitsu ishizuri kagami” on Google, this catalogue comes up. This way it has more searchability than a catalogue of images (slide 19).

The English text, meanwhile, provides a simple explanation about each book.

Looking Back at Previous Catalogues (slides 20–21)

Let’s look back on several catalogues by our elders. Many catalogues of Japanese rare books have been created in the 1990s to the early 2000s.

Berkeley, Cambridge, the British Library, Harvard-Yenching, The Netherlands, UCLA, The Chester Beatty, the Library of Congress.

They are still widely used by scholars of Japanese literature.

Many of them use the Hepburn system for the Romanisation except for the catalogue of Cambridge University and the Library of Congress.

Early Japanese Books in Cambridge University Library published in 1991 is only in Japanese without Romanisation in the main section of the catalogue.

Catalog of Japanese Rare Books in the Library of Congress published in 2003, the Romanisation uses the “kyūkyūshiki” proposed in 1999 by Nihon Rōmaji Kai (The Society for the Romanisation of the Japanese Alphabet). Regarding this choice, it is problematic that the Library of Congress Catalog does not use the Romanisation system used by its own library. I asked overseer, Professor Kenji Watanabe – who was once my teacher – and editor, Taniguchi Tomio – who lives near me – what a small world! – about the reasons for using “kyūkyūshiki”. They said they had made various enquiries in Japan, and chose the newest style at the time. Professor Sumie Jones, central on the American side, agreed to this.

Many scholars active in Nihon Kinsei Bungaku Kai took part in the making of this catalogue, and Japanese scholars would like to think of it as a reliable source.

If Mr Koyama of Cambridge University had not pointed this Romanisation issue out to me, I may have copied this way of Romanisation.

Those involved in the creation of these books worked incredibly hard, I know, and I have the greatest respect for them.

But times have indeed changed, and now is the era of the online databases.

The catalogues dating from 1990 to the early 2000s were mainly directed at Japanese people or those with a similar level of knowledge, especially wherever scholars from Japan were central in setting up a project.

Our job today is to consider how to include people who do not understand the Japanese language, so that curators of local collections can benefit from our work.

I think the best solution is a good relationship between specialists like you and the scholars from Japan.

I believe that just a little awareness can change the way the Japanese scholar works, and that communication can make things smoother.

Once we realise what is required in other countries, the majority of us will be happy to cooperate. It is just we haven't a clear image of what is actually required.

I received an email from Professor Kenji Watanabe, creator of the Library of Congress Catalog, which included the postscript:

“The Romanisation of titles etc. is difficult, isn't it? The first volume of *Edo Anthology* that I am editing at present is a cause of worry. Whenever I want to settle upon one way, various different opinions are voiced.”

I wonder how would members of the EAJRS respond to this?

So please do let me know what should be our basis in order to be “international” while working within Japan. Professionals such as yourselves, searching and cataloguing in multiple languages, may well have suggestions to propose.

Allow us scholars from Japan the chance to increase our awareness.

Finally, I am so grateful to the EAJRS for having given me the opportunity to meet Merete, for making me aware of this issue, and considering it along with me. With this, I come to the end of my part.

[How to make uncatalogued Japanese collections accessible \(Part 2\)](#)

Catalogue of Japanese Manuscripts and Rare Books (slides 22–23)

Thank you Professor Tsuda for your presentation. I am Merete Pedersen from Denmark. I have already talked about my catalogue of the early Japanese book collection at the Royal Library in Copenhagen, Denmark, two years ago at the EAJRS 2016 conference in Bucharest in Romania, so the news is now that there is now open access to the catalogue on the internet.

This is the link to the online version: <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-5280>

When I made my catalogue, I was also concerned like Professor Tsuda about how to make a catalogue which would be useful for people who are not able to read Japanese, but a catalogue that still meets the bibliographical standards required for cataloging Edo-period books and prints.

I think that it is very admirable that Professor Tsuda is so concerned about the future of the overseas collections (that is the collections held outside of Japan), and I was very happy to assist her with her work in Denmark.

What we became aware of was that the curators in charge of the collections are often art historians, and although they can't read Japanese kanji, they still know a great deal about the subject. Therefore, we think that the catalogues should also enlighten the Western curators about their own Japanese collections. This will we hope make them value their collections more and exhibit them more, which in effect would also make them take better care of their collections, and consider how they should be stored and preserved.

Seen from the opposite side in Japan, there is also a great concern that all the Japanese efforts put into electronic resources and digitized material etc. is of little use to for example Western art historians, as it is difficult or near impossible to retrieve the information in Japanese databases for non-Japanese speakers.

The JAL project 2016 (slide 24)

Therefore, there are concerted efforts to improve this situation in Japan, at least in national museums, archives and institutes, by listening to the opinions of Western curators and librarians. It seems that the

earlier “only kanji” rather exclusive way of thinking is changing in Japan. This issue was especially addressed in the JAL project (an abbreviation for Japanese Art Librarian project), organized by secretary general Mr. Takeshi Mizutani, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (MOMAT) and by Mr. Hideki Kikkawa, Tobunken (Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties) among others. The program was held three times and I was lucky to participate in it too.

In the reading room of SMK (slide 25)

Finally, about the catalogue that Professor Tsuda has presented today: when we met the curator, Mr. Claes Kofoed Christensen, who is in charge of the Japanese collection at the National Gallery of Denmark just last week and talked with him, he was very grateful for our work. The information provided will be very useful for him, he said, because the whole collection has to be digitized in the near future. However, he said that he probably will not or cannot include the title and author written in kanji. I think that Western curators should also consider the needs of Japanese researchers and Japanese specialists too and include kanji if it is possible. It is not only Japan that needs to internationalise.

These were some of my thoughts about this issue. Thank you for your attention.