

## **Preservation Self-Assessment for Japanese Special Collections A GUIDE**

Japanese studies libraries in Europe possess many rare and unique items such as old Japanese books, old maps, old photos, woodblock prints, manuscripts and historical records. In addition, they may have non-paper materials such as films, video tapes and digital files, as well as collections from private owners, and material deposited to the libraries. As the nature of these precious items is different from general collections, those sets of items are called Japanese special collections. These are usually regarded as items for permanent retention; they are not normally allowed to be taken out from the Library and can be perused only inside the library under staff invigilation.

In this guide to the 'Preservation Self-Assessment for Japanese Special Collections' (hereafter 'the Preservation Self-Assessment' for short), Japanese special collections are referred to as 'the Special Collection', and European libraries which possess such collections as 'the Library'.

In order to ensure that their special collections are preserved in the proper manner, some libraries may use preservation<sup>1</sup> specialists for assessment while others may have the librarians in charge of the collection make such assessment themselves. 'Preservation Self-Assessment' is intended to be a tool to assist non-specialists in such endeavour. Bearing in mind that there are a number of libraries with a variety of different collections, only basic general issues are listed. Editing 'Preservation Self-Assessment' might be necessary to adjust to your own Library's purpose and structure and to your Special Collection's size and characteristics.

Before starting to answer the questions in 'Preservation Self-Assessment,' it is important to consider what this is for and how to utilise the results afterwards. You must determine, for example, to whom you will report the results, whether to make plans for preservation or to discuss improvement measures, and who is to be responsible for such plans and measures.

This 'Preservation Self-Assessment' is meant to be carried out only once every twenty years or so unless some special circumstances have cropped up—such as new buildings or transfer of collections—that present new preservation issues to consider. As for more regular (such as annual) inspections, please see the separate publication entitled 'Periodical Preservation Checklist for Japanese Special Collections'.

The following explains the 'Preservation Self-Assessment' item by item.

## **A Administration**

### **I Special Collection**

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<sup>1</sup> For the definition of the preservation vocabulary, see Ref. 1 at the end of this document.

- 1 Describe the outline of the Collection—contents, format, approximate number of items, etc.
- 2 Describe the history of the Collection—when it was started, how it has developed.
- 3 If available, insert copies of journalistic and/or academic articles about the Collection, exhibition catalogues, etc.
- 4 List approximate numbers of items in the Collection that are of paper material (e.g. antique books, manuscripts, maps and photographs) and those that are of non-paper material (e.g. film, video tapes, recordings and digital files).
- 5 Archives need special treatment in cataloguing, and they are often of special value because of their uniqueness and rarity. If the Collection includes such items, describe their contents and numbers.  
  
See: Bastian, Jeannette A., et al, *Archives in Libraries: What Librarians and Archivists Need to Know to Work Together* (Society of American Archivists, 2015), 137p.
- 6 Do you have any material deposited by someone? State who the depositor is, how many items, under what terms and conditions, etc.
- 7 Do you intend to acquire more items for the Special Collection in the future? If so, do you have acquisition policies or guidelines? If not, do you consider them necessary?
- 8 What is the significance of the Special Collection for the Library as a whole? Is it well understood by the general staff? How does the management regard the Special Collection? You may consider publicity of the Special Collection within the Library as well as for the general public, since it may encourage future acquisitions and result in an increase in library user/visitor numbers.

## II Stacks and Reading Rooms

- 1-2 In which part of the stacks is the Special Collection stored? It is recommended that the Special Collection be located separately from the general collection. Is it stored this way?
- 3 Is the Special Collection to be perused in the same reading room as for the general collection? Is it a room where staff can keep an eye on the user?

## III Policies and Plans

- 1-2 Do you have preservation policies and programmes/plans? If there are written policies and plans, do you think they are appropriate, realistic and actually observed? If there are not, do you think the Library needs them?
- 3 Do you carry out periodical (e.g. annual) preservation inspections<sup>2</sup> of the Special Collection? If not, do you think this will be necessary in the future?

## IV Organisation

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<sup>2</sup> For more details, see the separate publication, 'Periodical Preservation Inspections for Japanese Special Collections'.

- 1 Under the Library regulations, how is the preservation of the Special Collection defined? Is it sufficient? If it is not written, do you think it should be?
- 2 Who is responsible for the preservation of the Special Collection? Is their duty clearly understood?
- 3 If the Library is part of a national or university library, does it liaise with the preservation department of its parent institution? What kind of support does it receive?

## V Staff Awareness and Education

- 1-2 Are the Library staff aware of the importance of the Special Collection and its preservation? Are those in charge of preservation knowledgeable and experienced? Are any opportunities to learn more about preservation provided for them?
- 3 One of the most important parts of preservation of the Special Collection is the everyday treatment of its items by the staff. This includes, for example, shelving, transportation, instruction and invigilation of users, care in photocopying by staff/users, exhibitions and digitisation. Are the staff sufficiently educated about these? If so, what kind of educational opportunities are given?

## VI Preservation Measures and Budgets

- 1-2 At the moment, what measures are put in place for preservation of the Special Collection? How much is the annual budget?  
The budget items may include: facility maintenance, environmental control, cleaning of stacks and reading rooms, protective enclosures, cleaning of books and other items, repair and preservation treatments, microfilming and digitisation, purchase of preservation tools, preservation survey and staff education.

## VII Disaster Prevention

Plans for preventing damage from natural and man-made disasters and for dealing with the consequences when they happen are of utmost importance for both general collections and the Special Collection. Questions 1-4 are about past disasters and possible threats; 5-9 are about plans for prevention and action.

There are various informative publications regarding disaster prevention for libraries. We would recommend the following two, which are concise and useful.

'IFLA Principles for the Care and Handling of Library Materials', 1998.

<http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/pac/ipi/ipi1-en.pdf>. p.15-20.

'IFALA Disaster Preparedness and Planning: A Brief manual',

<http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/pac/ipi/ipi6-en.pdf>.

# B Buildings and Environmental Control

## I Buildings

- 1 About the Library building where the Special Collection is housed: When was it built? How is it structured? What material is used? Where is it located?
- 2 Has the Library ever had accidents or incidents with regard to the Special Collection?
- 3 Are there any possibilities of break-ins, burglaries or thefts? Is there an alarm system installed? Is there a fire-extinguishing system? How is the building superintended? Are there night patrols?

## II Book Stacks

- 1 In which stacks is the Special Collection stored? Where are the stacks located? How many shelves are there? Do you use cabinets?
- 2 Is there enough space in the stacks for the Special Collection? Some libraries store a part of the Special Collection in another place (such as general collection stacks or an office) because of the lack of space. Does this happen at your Library?
- 3 Some types of documents such as old maps, photographs, films and oversize books need to be kept in special storages. Are they stored in appropriate storages to the nature and type of the items?
- 4 *Wahon* or traditional Japanese books should be protected in boxes and placed horizontally on shelves. How many books are unprotected and placed vertically on shelves? What do you think should be done?
- 5 The Special Collection should be stored in separate stacks away from the general collection. Is this done at the Library, or do the Special Collection shelves and cabinets contain other items as well?
- 6 Are the materials and forms of the shelves and cabinets appropriate and safe for the Special Collection?
- 7 Films (movies, microfilms, video films, etc.) should be stored separately from books and other paper documents. Is this done at the Library? Do staff understand differences in film bases (e.g. TAC and PET), each of which requires different handling practice?  
See: 'IFLA Principles for the Care and Handling of Library Materials', 1998.  
<http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/pac/ipi/ipi1-en.pdf>, p. 50-52.

## III Environment

- 1 Temperature and relative humidity in the stacks and the reading room where the Special Collection is stored and read are important factors in its preservation<sup>3</sup>. Are temperature and humidity levels constantly monitored? What equipment is used for the purpose?
- 2 Looking at the results of monitoring, are temperature and humidity at appropriate levels<sup>4</sup>?

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<sup>3</sup> Regarding the effect of temperature and humidity to paper-based materials, see the Ref. 3 at the end of the document.

<sup>4</sup> "IFLA Principles for the Preservation and Conservation of Library Materials" published by IFLA in 1986, states 'A suitable compromise for conditions in storage areas can generally be found in the temperature range of 16 °C to 21°C and a relative humidity between 40 and 60 percent.'. ISO 11799 (2003): Information and documentation-Document storage requirement for archive and library materials, states more severe criteria

- 3-4 What kind of air-conditioning machine controls temperature and relative humidity? Ask the facility management department if necessary. At present what temperature and humidity levels is the machine set at?
- 5 For the preservation of library materials, it is important that there should not be too much fluctuation in temperature and relative humidity between the stacks and the reading room. Do you do *narashi* (conditioning) to avoid drastic changes in temperature and humidity when items of the Special Collection are removed from the stacks and brought into the reading room, or vice versa?  
A simple way to 'condition' an item from the stacks is to put it in a corrugated cardboard box and keep it in the reading room or in the office for a day or two before taking it out of the box for perusal. When it is to go back, put it in the same box and keep it in the stacks for a day or two before taking it out and putting it back on the shelf. As a result, the temperature and humidity levels change slowly and gradually, thus avoiding stress to the paper and the book.
- 6-7 Describe lighting in the stacks and the reading room. Ultra-violet light is one of the most harmful factors to library materials. Does sunlight come directly into the reading room? Are there curtains or blinds to shut out natural light? Do the light fixtures in rooms use the non-UV type of light?
- 8-10 Air pollution is another big enemy of books, especially in urban areas. Is the air circulated well enough in the stacks and the reading room? What type of ventilation system is used? Ask the facility management department if necessary. Is the Library building entirely no smoking?
- 11 Good communication and cooperation with the facility management department are vital when it comes to environmental control. Do its staff understand important issues in preservation of the Special Collection? Do the Library and the department well communicate in this matter?

## IV Housekeeping, Insects and Mould

- 1 Are the reading rooms, offices, stacks and book shelves regularly cleaned? How often is it done, and to what extent?
- 2-4 Although insect and mould problems are fairly limited in today's European libraries, they can cause significant damage to collection items. Have there ever been incidents of pest damage in the Library which required fumigation and/or use of insecticide? How about incidents of mould damage which required disinfection? If there have been such occasions in the past, when did the incidents occur, what kind of damage was done, and what measure was taken?
- 5 It is highly recommended that libraries practise IPM (Integrated Pest Management) <sup>5</sup> such as monitoring of insect damage in the stacks and the reading rooms by using insect traps. Do you carry out such monitoring?

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which is shown at the end of this document (Ref.2).

More adequate and practical criteria would be found in the "IFLA Principles for the Care and Handling of Library Materials", op.cit., p.25.

<sup>5</sup> For IPM, see IFLA Principles, <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/pac/jpi/jpi1-en.pdf>, p.32.

- 6 It is particularly important to check newly-received old materials to see if there are any insect or mould problems. Do you always check new acquisitions carefully?

## C Conservation and Reproduction

Basic damage prevention is the most important and effective measure in preservation. Along with the above-mentioned disaster plans, environmental control and regular maintenance, the damage prevention measures range from inspection of newly-acquired items and proper handling to storing in protective enclosures.

'Take action only when necessary in order to prevent further deterioration and damage' should be the standard policy in preservation. Bear in mind that there have been incidents in the past where, under the name of 'restoration', books and documents were given treatments that destroyed their value as historical evidence. With regard to this point, see the following two articles:

Kibe, Toru, 'Leave the Front Cover Detached: Restoration of Precious Books and Preservation of Documents,' *Wakosho WG Website* (in Japanese).

Yasue, Akio, 'A Century of Preservation of Tonko Documents,' *Gakushuin University Faculty of Humanities Annual Report 62* (2015), pp. 289-316 (in Japanese).

[http://www.gakushuin.ac.jp/univ/let/top/publication/res\\_pdf\\_62/019.pdf](http://www.gakushuin.ac.jp/univ/let/top/publication/res_pdf_62/019.pdf)

Reproduction is an essential measure in preservation of the Special Collection. It prevents the wear and tear of the original material as caused by repeated handling, thus keeping it in good physical condition. It also guarantees and improves accessibility of documents, which is the fundamental purpose of preservation.

### I Handling

- 1 Do you inspect newly-acquired items sufficiently? Do you give them necessary treatment at the time of acquisition, such as cleaning, unfolding pages into their original state, recording torn pages, providing protective enclosures, etc?
- 2-3 Do you have a manual instructing the staff how to handle the Special Collection? Are there regulations for the use of the Special Collection? How do you educate/instruct the staff and users?
- 4 Do you take special care in handling items in unusual format such as scrolls and large maps?
- 5 Are eating, drinking, smoking and use of fountain/ballpoint pens prohibited in the reading rooms of the Special Collection?
- 6 There is a danger of damaging the items in the Special Collection while photocopying them. Do you have any preventive measure put in place?
- 7 Do you have white gloves available for use by staff and users when handling photographic prints? You must be aware, however, that the use of white gloves in handling antique Japanese books is not appropriate.

- 8 Do you inspect the items before and after they are handed over to the user? After inspection, do you give them necessary treatment such as cleaning, providing protective enclosures, repair and reproduction?

## II Protective Enclosures

- 1 Use of protective enclosures is one of the important preservation measures of the Special Collection. What do you do about it? What type of enclosures do you use?
- 2 It is essential that the enclosures be made of archival (i.e. acid-free and lignin-free) material. Do you use such material?
- 3 Are the enclosures the right size for the items inside? Are they not too small? Are pages not bent or folded inside?
- 4 For future work, state approximately how many items need to be put in protective enclosures. Also, state approximately how many items are kept in enclosures not made of archival material, and how many need new enclosures.
- 5 Are photographs stored in enclosures made of material that has passed PAT (Photo Activity Test)<sup>6</sup>?

## III Conservation Treatment

- 1 Repair is not always necessary even if an item has some damage like insect holes or wear and tear. In order to maintain the item's original state, hence its value as historical evidence, you must be aware of two fundamental rules: 1) avoid repair work unless it is absolutely necessary; and 2) when repair, do it minimally. Keeping these rules in mind, do you think there are items in the Special Collection that are in need of repair? Are there many or few?
- 2 If there is an item in need of repair, is it something that you can do yourself, or do you have to ask a conservation specialist? If the Library regularly contracts out, state the name of the conservator(s) and/or the company.
- 3 State the approximate number of items in the Special Collection that are in need of repair, then consider which to give priority to. Do you carry out repair work according to schedule such as an annual plan?
- 4-5 Do your conservators observe international standards and principles of conservation?<sup>7</sup> Do they make a record of each repair work? Who in the Library keeps such records? Are the records accessible to the public?

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<sup>6</sup> For PAT, see 'IFLA Principles', <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/pac/ipi/ipi1-en.pdf>, p.48.

<sup>7</sup> For international standards for conservation, see BS4971:2002, *Repair and Allied Processes for Conservation of Documents—Recommendations*, British Standard (2002); and 'Principles of Conservation and Restoration in Libraries,' *IFLA Journal*, vol. 5, no. 4 (1979), pp. 292-301.

## IV Reproduction

As mentioned above, reproduction (by photocopying, microfilming and digitisation) is an essential measure of preservation. It makes possible a wide use of the Special Collection while protecting the physical state of the originals.

- 1 Have you reproduced any item in the Special Collection in the past? If so, state what items, how many and what methods of reproduction.
- 2 Are there items that need reproduction in the future? Have you identified them?
- 3 It is desirable that digitised items are available to the public online. If you have digitised images, are they accessible through the internet?
- 4 Is there a plan to digitise items in the Special Collection?
- 5 For digitisation, has the Library obtained/tried to obtain outside funding and/or cooperated with other institutions?

## V Exhibitions and Loans

- 1 Exhibitions are an important way of utilising the Special Collection and making it known to the public. Has the Library put on exhibitions in the past? Are there plans to do so in the future?
- 2 Exhibitions can also cause damage and deterioration of precious items. Do you have measures to avoid such mishap? When you exhibit items, do you follow general preservation guidelines<sup>8</sup>?
- 3-4 Other organisations may ask the Library for a loan of certain items in the Special Collection for exhibitions and other purposes. Although the Library that keeps the Special Collection is expected to consider such loans, they also entail a risk of damage to the items. Do you have regulations for loans?
- 5 When allowing items to leave the Library, it is vital to check the physical condition of each item before and after the loan. Do you do this?

## D Other Related Issues

### I Cataloguing and Processing

- 1-2 The Special Collection is preserved so that it can be used by the public, and cataloguing is indispensable for the purpose. Do you have a complete catalogue? If you have uncatalogued items, do you have plans to catalogue them? If so, when is this due?

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<sup>8</sup> See ICA. 'Guidelines on Exhibiting Archival Materials' <http://www.ica.org/en/guidelines-exhibiting-archival-materials> National Preservation Office (UK). Guidance for Exhibiting Archives and Library Materials'. <http://326gtd123dbk1xdkdm489u1q.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/National-Preservation-Office-Guidance-for-exhibiting-archive-and-library-materials-Feb-2000.pdf>

- 3 Archives need to be documented in a different way from the book collection. Are there any finding aids available to identify the items?  
See: Op. cit. Bastian, Jeannette A. et al., *ibid.*, 137p.
- 4 The catalogue and the finding aids should be uploaded on the Library website so that the general public can access and search the Special Collection. Do you have them available online? If not, do you have a plan to do so?

## **II Use**

- 1 Although the Special Collection may not be used very often, it should be preserved in order to guarantee present and future use. How many times is the Special Collection used by readers in a specific period? How often is it used for exhibitions and other purposes?
- 2 Does the Library keep a record of the Special Collection usage?
- 3-4 What do you do to promote the use of the Special Collection? Do you publicise it, for example, on the Library website?

## **III Cooperation and Collaboration**

Many Japanese studies libraries in Europe are more or less independent of other institutions, which means that they tend to manage and preserve the Special Collection in their own way. Libraries should work together for the sake of better preservation.

- 1-2 If the Library is part of a university or a national library, do you work with the preservation department of its parent institution? Do you ever cooperate and collaborate with neighbouring libraries, museums and archives with regard to conservation and preservation of materials?
- 3 Do you have any contacts of experts and/or institutions you can turn to when you come across problems and questions regarding conservation and preservation of the Special Collection? Do you have a list of such professionals and institutions?

## Ref.1: Definitions

"ISO5127-2000(E): Information and documentation --- Vocabulary <6 Preservation of documents >"

**Preservation:** All measures taken, including financial and strategic decisions, to maintain the integrity and extend the life of document or collections

**Conservation:** Intervention techniques applied to prevent, arrest or delay deterioration

**Restoration:** Actions taken to return a document which has suffered deterioration or damage as closely as practicable to its original state

## Ref.2: ISO 11799

Document Storage Requirement for Archive and Library Materials. Recommended climatic conditions for the long-term storage of archive and library materials. Partially extracted from Annex B (informative).

Type of Materials	Temperature (°C)			Relative humidity (%)		
	Min.	Max.	*	Min.	Max.	*
Paper, optimum preservation	2	18	±1	30	45	±3
Paper, staffed stack area, items in regular use	14	18	±1	35	50	±3
Parchment, leather	2	18	±1	50	60	±3
Photographic paper prints: black and white silver gelatine		18	±2	30	50	±5
Photographic paper prints: colour (chromogenic)		2	±2	30	40	±5

\* Tolerable daily changes with the limits

## Ref.3: Effect of storage temperature and humidity on paper permanence

Temperature 25 °C, humidity 50% RH are set standard 1.00 in the table. The table indicates, for example, paper which is expected to last 100 years under storage temperature 25 °C, humidity 50% would last 2070 years under 15 °C, 10% condition, while only 14 years under 35 °C, 70% condition.

Temperature (°C)	Relative humidity (%)			
	70%	50%	30%	10%
35	0.14	0.19	0.30	0.68
25	0.74	1.00	1.56	3.57
15	2.74	5.81	9.05	20.70

Cf: Richard D. Smith, *The non-aqueous deacidification of paper and books*, 1970, Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1970, p.55.

See also Preservation Index table in *New Tools for Preservation*. Image Permanence Institute, 1995, p.7. Website: <http://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/store/publications/new-tools-preservation/>