

## Old and Rare Japanese Books in U.S. Collections

*This article discusses various patterns for organization of rare and old Japanese books in U.S. academic and research libraries. Criteria for collections of rare and specialized materials, storage and access, and bibliographic control were investigated in major university and research libraries and art museums. Because each institution has established its own patterns of organization and criteria for rarity and special status, it is impossible, and probably unnecessary, to obtain agreement on universal and standard criteria for Japanese rare books. However, the lack of adequate bibliographic control for a large portion of this material is a matter of serious concern.*

**T**HE INTEGRATION OF EAST ASIAN LANGUAGE MATERIALS into Western libraries presents a variety of problems: Should the books be shelved with Western language materials or located in a separate facility? Should catalog cards for East Asian materials be filed in a general library card catalog, in a separate card catalog, or both? These are basic questions that libraries with East Asian holdings must decide. The situation becomes more complex when dealing with rare and old books and manuscripts, which are frequently given further specialized treatment because of their unusual characteristics.

This article will analyze how U.S. libraries and museums have defined, organized, permitted access to, and established bibliographic control over collections of rare and pre-modern Japanese books and manuscripts. It is based on a study of collections

at several major university libraries—California (Berkeley), Chicago, Illinois—Indiana, Harvard (Harvard-Yenching, Fogg Art Museum), Yale, Columbia, and Michigan—and the New York Public Library, Library of Congress, Art Institute and Field Museum in Chicago, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

### CRITERIA FOR RARE AND SPECIALIZED COLLECTIONS

The first areas of concern are the criteria for establishing rare and specialized collections of older Japanese materials. The surveys of East Asian collections in American libraries, which Tsuen-hsuei Tsien has undertaken for the Association for Asian Studies' Committee on East Asian Libraries, periodically have included information on rare materials and have provided an important starting point for the present study.<sup>1</sup> Tsien has established three standards of rarity: pre-1600 imprints, manuscripts, and fine printing. The present study works within a broader framework, which encompasses Japanese materials specifically designated as "rare" as well as other concentrations of Japanese materials that have not been so defined but have unusual and noteworthy characteristics. These charac-

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teristics include format, early publication dates, and special subject concentrations. Besides being located in East Asian libraries, Japanese materials are found in special international collections and in art museums.

#### *Date of Publication*

For libraries, date of publication is the simplest means of determining what is "rare." Difficulties in precisely identifying the publication date in Japanese books and manuscripts are numerous. Frequently dates do not appear in publications earlier than the mid-seventeenth century. When dates are provided, later copies of manuscripts, and later impressions and newly carved blocks for wood block printed books, may retain the original date of publication. Whatever the technical problems involved in date identification, libraries generally establish a cutoff date for rarity.<sup>2</sup>

Among U.S. libraries that have such dates, there is little agreement. The East Asiatic Library at the University of California, Berkeley, has the earliest cut-off date for rarity among U.S. collections: 1660. The Far Eastern Library of the University of Washington describes works antedating 1700 as rare and the University of Illinois Rare Book Room designates pre-1701 Japanese imprints rare, whereas Harvard-Yenching Library places Japanese books published before 1799 in its Treasure Room. The Far Eastern Library at the University of Chicago defines pre-Meiji, or pre-1868, publications as rare.

While there are bibliographic and historical reasons to support each of these dates, the fact remains that most U.S. libraries have not determined any date for rarity for Japanese publications. Other criteria are used to demarcate rare or special Japanese materials.

#### *Scarcity*

Scarcity of a particular edition is a widely recognized criterion for rarity. But there appears to be no consistent standard enumerating how many (or few) copies of a work make it rare. The criterion of "fine printing" is also vague and is usually related to other considerations such as date, historical significance of the work or printing technique, and price.

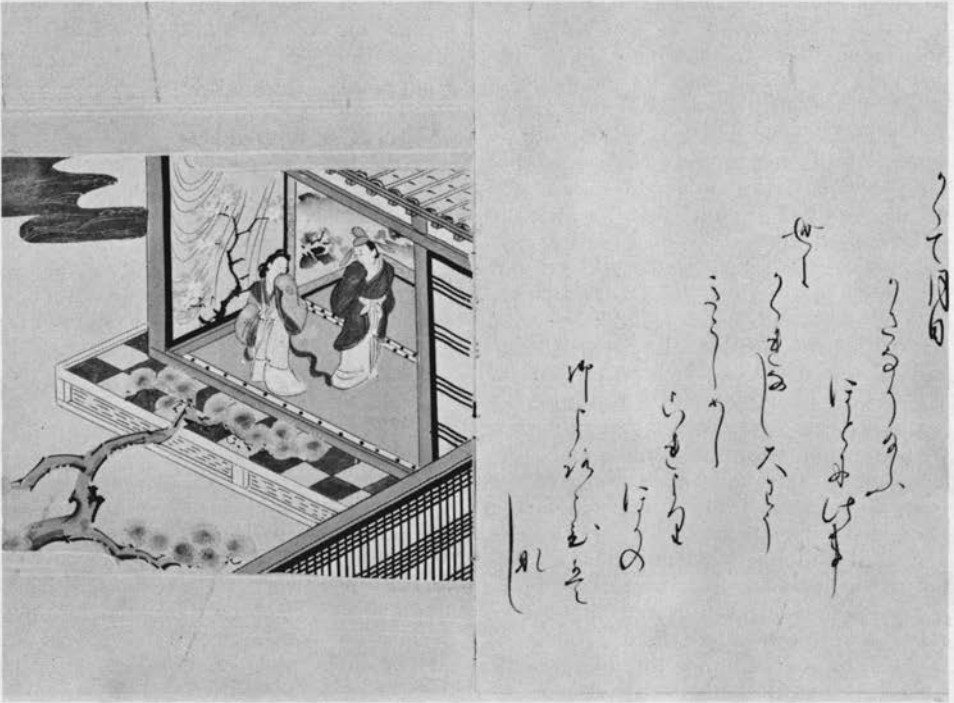
#### *Format*

Format often establishes rarity or special status. Manuscripts or works in hand-script and scrolls are almost always placed in special custody in the library world. The reasons such items find their way into the rare book category or special custody are because of their uniqueness (manuscripts are, after all, one of a kind) and the difficulty of shelving their irregular formats. Columbia University's East Asian Library and the Orientalia Division of the Library of Congress keep their copies of *nara-ehon*, or Nara Picture Books (a kind of illustrated manuscript), in locked file cabinets.

Columbia University has also utilized format considerations for defining another special collection of Japanese books. Having no rare book category *per se*, Columbia's East Asian Library places all of its *wahon*, or books in traditional Japanese binding (double leaves stitched together with thread on the right-hand side), in a locked cage within its stacks. This segregation of *wahon* is unusual among U.S. collections.

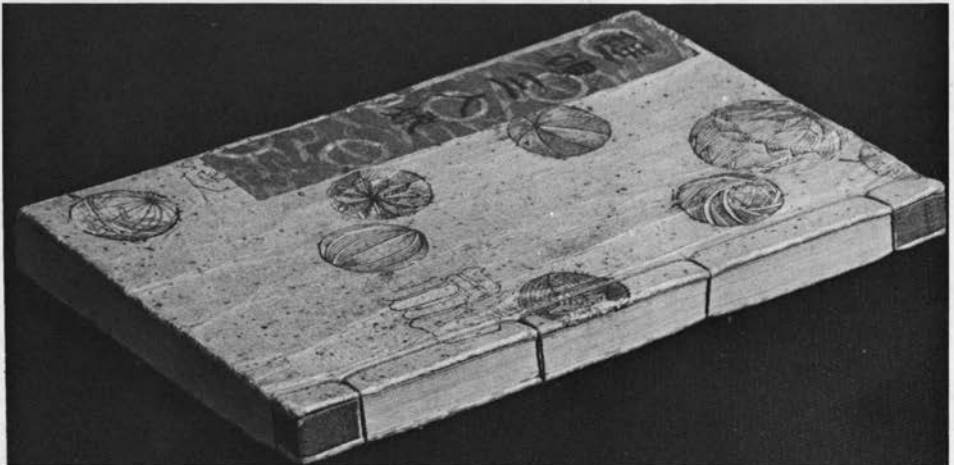
The East Asiatic Library at Berkeley maintains two collections of maps and manuscripts that combine both rare and nonrare materials in order to keep works of similar format together. These collections are distinct from their rare book room collection, which is made up chiefly of printed works with imprint dates before 1660. The map collection consists of some 2,000 Japanese maps from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries and printed primarily from woodblocks or engraved copper plates. There are few collections of Japanese maps, even in Japan, which can rival the extent and quality of the one at Berkeley. The East Asiatic Library's manuscript collection comprises approximately 7,000 volumes, the majority of which are pre-twentieth century covering a wide range of subjects, including literature and governmental ordinances. There are as well important literary manuscripts of modern Japanese authors, such as Akutagawa Ryunosuke, Koda Rohan, and Tsubouchi Shoyo.<sup>3</sup>

Another collection that is defined by format but not restricted by national origin is the Spencer Collection of the New York Public Library. This collection began with



Rare Book Room, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Nara-ehon, or "Nara-picture book," a type of bound, illustrated manuscript that flourished from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. This seventeenth-century work relates the tale of Kumano no honji.



Rare Book Room, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Wahon, or Japanese-style book utilizing colorful covers and double leaves stitched together with thread and title label pasted on upper left-hand side of cover. This work is an illustrated novel, *Temari uta sannin* (1860s), in fifteen volumes by Shōtei Kinsui.

an endowment and collection of French illustrated books from William Augustus Spencer in 1912. The income from the endowment was "to be spent for the purchase of the finest illustrated books and manuscripts that can be procured of any country and in any language and of any period."<sup>4</sup> The Spencer Collection is now one of the greatest collections of works in pictorial formats in the world. A significant part of the collection is Japanese. It consists of 300 illustrated manuscripts (chiefly *emakimono*, or picture scrolls) and 1,200 illustrated books from the eighth to the twentieth century, the majority of which are pre-Meiji. The bookish orientation of the collection (by which is meant works with significant text as well as bound works) is confirmed by the fact that loose-leaf Japanese prints in the New York Public Library are held in the Print Division.

Format can also be an important distinction made in the arrangement of materials in art museums. Art museums do not collect rare books, or for that matter, books as such. They are acquired for their artistic value. But one way of locating books in art collections is by their format, since bound works must be shelved as books.

The Asiatic Department of the Boston

Museum of Fine Arts has a collection of approximately 500 illustrated books related to the development of *ukiyo-e*, the woodblock prints of the "Floating World" or contemporary scene of the Tokugawa period (1600-1867). While these books are kept with the Japanese print collection, they are all shelved together in cabinets and are arranged alphabetically by "designer," usually a prominent illustrator. Since these books are not cataloged or under any sort of bibliographic control, their bound format is what distinguishes them from other print material.

### Subject

While some special collections are designed around format, others are delineated by subject matter. One of the clearest examples of this type of collection is the Japanese materials in the library of the Institute for Sexual Research at Indiana University. These works were collected because of their sexual content, but the Japanese items at the institute have other special and rare qualities. Most of the works are from the Tokugawa period (1600-1867), and the modern works are manuscripts with hand-painted illustrations. The approximately forty Japanese works at the Institute for



Rare Book Room, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Emakimono, or picture scroll. Hōrai monogatari (17th cent.?)

Sexual Research are pillow books, brides manuals, and erotic novels.

### *Origins of Collections*

Another quality by which special collections assume their character is origin. Some libraries keep collections received from a single source intact, particularly if they form a harmonious unit. One such collection is the Laufer Collection located in the Far Eastern Department's reading room of the Field Museum in Chicago. This collection was acquired in 1907 in Japan by Berthold Laufer, the noted East Asian anthropologist connected with the Field Museum. These 100 works were selected because of their usefulness to Japanese anthropological research. They cover the fields of archaeology, arts and crafts, geography, Buddhist historical sights, traditional Japanese dictionaries and encyclopedias, as well as studies of Chinese and Japanese languages. The collection is a conglomerate of rare and less unusual works with some imprints from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most from the nineteenth century. The Laufer Collection has not only remained intact—some of it retains its original wrapping.

The Charles R. Boxer Collection at the Lilly Library of Indiana University is another collection that has retained its original identity, though not by being shelved as a unit. There is a separate shelflist for the Boxer collection, which, while consisting of works in many languages related to the expansion of Europe, includes some sixty Japanese items connected with *Rangaku*, or "Dutch Studies" in Japan. *Rangaku* flourished during the Tokugawa period, since the Dutch were the only westerners allowed in Japan from the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century. Maps and travel guides of Tokugawa period Nagasaki and Edo, studies on medicine, science, and the Dutch language, these works provided original source material and illustrations for Boxer's seminal work on the Dutch influence in Japan, entitled *Jan Compagnie in Japan, 1600-1850* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1950).

The Orientalia Division of the Library of Congress has several collections identified by the original collector. These include the Noyes Collection, the Asakawa Collection, and the Sakanishi Collection. The Noyes

Collection was originally a gift of the Washington journalist, Crosby Stuart Noyes, to the Library of Congress in 1906. It contained a large assortment of works of Japanese art including watercolors, original drawings and sketchbooks, wood engravings, lithographs, and 658 illustrated books, mainly *gafu*, or picture albums classified by type of subject matter, and *gacho*, unbound, folding picture albums. Single sheet prints from the original Noyes' gift were transferred to the Print Division, but all books are now kept in the Orientalia Division and are known officially as the Noyes Collection. The names of the two other collections are informal designations utilized to define groups of books that were purchased for the Library of Congress and remain largely as separate units.

The Asakawa Collection is the fruit of an acquisition trip of the historian, Kanichi Asakawa, commissioned by the Librarian of Congress in 1907. While many subject areas are covered, the great strength of this collection is Japanese Buddhism, in which field it may be the best outside Japan. One unfortunate lapse in judgment by Asakawa was to destroy the original Japanese bindings and to rebind the books in cloth or leather in the European fashion. The western-style bound Asakawa Collection, which is uncataloged, is located in a distinct area within the stacks of the Orientalia Division.

During the tenure of Shio Sakanishi as head of the Japanese Section of Orientalia from 1930 to 1942, many outstanding pre-Meiji works were purchased including 300 *kibyōshi*, or popular illustrated books of the late Tokugawa period, several early editions and studies of *Genji monogatari* and *Manyōshū*, and a number of literary works from the famed Tokugawa publishing house, Hachimonjiya. A small number of these works acquired by Sakanishi were cataloged for the Nippon Decimal Collection in Orientalia, but the majority of them remain uncataloged and shelved together in a separate location in the Orientalia stacks.

Two outstanding collections of Japanese rare materials were gifts of Japanese alumni to their American alma maters. One of these donations was from the former Japanese students of the Harvard Law School. In 1936 on the occasion of the 300th

anniversary of the founding of Harvard, Tokyo University was commissioned by these Harvard alumni to acquire a collection of books dealing with Japanese legal history. This collection, which is the most extensive in its field outside of Japan, was only recently rediscovered in storage by an enterprising law graduate student, James Kanda. Kanda took it upon himself to catalog this unusual collection comprising legal codes and personal diaries of judges and legal scholars. Of the works, 60 percent are manuscripts, and 90 percent are pre-Meiji materials, the earliest from the twelfth century. There are also early editions and drafts of Meiji codes and the constitution.

The other alumni collection is the Yale Association of Japan Collection, one of the most impressive groupings of Japanese rare material in the United States. This donation of books was received by Yale University in 1935. Professor Katsumi Kuroita of Tokyo University was commissioned by the Yale Association of Japan to collect works to illustrate the evolution of Japanese culture as reflected in its manuscripts and printed books.

The Yale Association of Japan Collection contains some 350 items covering a wide variety of subjects including geography, art, literature, religion, education, customs and manners, popular culture, useful art, and printing. Some of the works are reproductions, but most are originals, including historical documents from the eleventh to the eighteenth century and an especially fine representation of Buddhist manuscripts dating as far back as the eighth century. In addition, there are many examples of printed works such as three original *Hyakumantō darani*, an eighth-century printed paper charm housed in a miniature pagoda; *kokatsujibon*, or old works in movable type by imperial, monastery, and private presses; and a collection of 1932-34 facsimiles of rare Chinese, Korean, and especially Japanese manuscripts and printed books.

#### STORAGE AND ACCESS

There are three basic patterns of storage of Japanese rare materials: a separate area within an East Asian collection, as in the Far Eastern libraries of the University of Washington and the University of Chicago;

an international rare book collection for an entire library complex, as in Yale's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library where the Yale Association of Japan Collection is located; and other kinds of special international collections, for example, the Spencer Collection of the New York Public Library and Indiana's Institute for Sexual Research.

The patterns of access to special collections of Japanese materials are basically four, ranging from liberal to conservative. Some collections, such as the Harvard-Yenching Library, permit researchers direct and unaccompanied access to the rare book stacks. At the Far Eastern Library of the University of Washington and at Harvard's Fogg Museum, patrons may have direct access only when they are accompanied by a member of the library or museum staff. There is no admittance into the stacks of the Beinecke Library at Yale, so items from the Yale Association of Japan Collection are delivered to the researcher, who may use the works in private. This is also the case with the Bartlett Collection at Michigan's Asia Library.

The most restrictive policy for the use of materials was observed at the Far Eastern Department of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. Materials are brought to the patron, who is frequently restricted even from handling the piece. The pages of an *ukiyo*e book of *bijin*, or portraits of women, were turned for the author of this article by a member of the staff.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHIC CONTROL

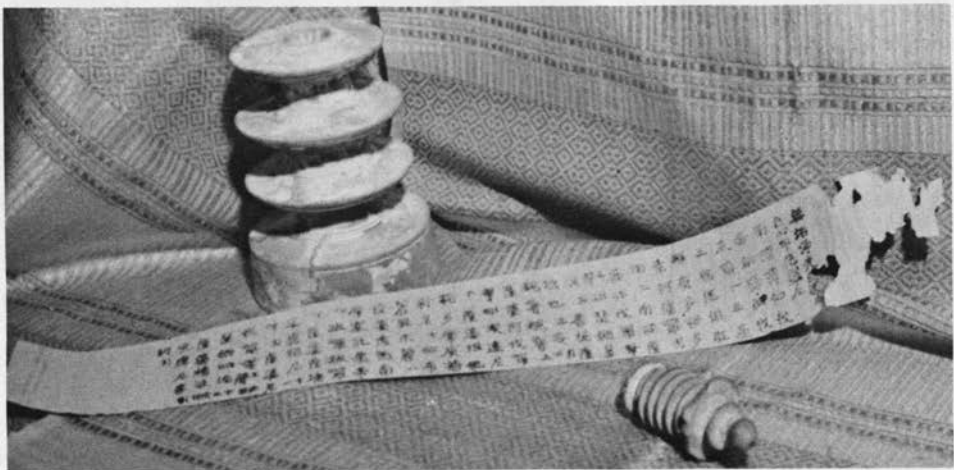
Bibliographic control is fundamental to the full utilization of a collection. The means of keeping records of materials held in rare and special collections vary considerably. Full library cataloging is perhaps the ideal method of bibliographic control.

The Bartlett Collection at Michigan is cataloged with cards in the public catalog. Works of "rare" imprints, that is pre-1660, in the East Asiatic Library's Rare Book Room at Berkeley are fully cataloged. Library cards for them are marked "Rare Book Room" and are to be found in their authority catalog. Neither their map nor manuscript collections are represented in the card catalog. In addition to being fully cataloged, rare book collections at Illinois,



Rare Book Room, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Kibyōshi, or "yellow cover books," a genre popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This work is Santō Kyōden's *Happyakumanryō kogane no no kamihan* (1791).



Rare Book Room, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Hyakumantō darani, or "One Million Pagodas and Dharani," manufactured and printed in 770 by order of Empress Shotoku. The printed prayer or dharani is the oldest authenticated printed text in the world.

Chicago, and Harvard-Yenching have separate shelflists as well.

### Book Catalogs

Another means of bibliographic access to a collection is the printed catalog in book form, which has the additional possibility of wide distribution. The Spencer Collection does not have a public catalog for its Japanese holdings, but these works are listed chronologically, with descriptions by the dealer or collectors from whom the work was acquired in the second appendix to *The New York Public Library's Dictionary Catalog and Shelf List of the Spencer Collection of Illustrated Books and Manuscripts*, published in 1971.<sup>5</sup>

Probably the most famous printed catalog of a U.S. collection of Japanese materials is Kenji Toda's *Descriptive Catalogue of Japanese and Chinese Illustrated Books in the Ryerson Library* published in 1931. This work is a catalog of the Japanese illustrated books held by the Art Institute of Chicago. These books were acquired almost entirely from the collections of two early western pioneers in the study of Japanese illustrated books—Ernest Fenollosa and Mrs. Louise Norton Brown. Besides listing the more than 1,000 works chronologically and fully indexing them, Toda annotated each work and described its historical setting. Toda's work is more than a catalog. It is a scholarly study of the history of printing and illustration from 1600 to 1865 and a general cultural history of the Tokugawa period. Toda's *Descriptive Catalogue* is now, regrettably, out of print.

A similar catalog, conceived on the same broad scale but focusing on an earlier period of Japanese history, is Kanichi Asakawa's *Gifts of the Yale Association of Japan*. Prepared in 1945, Asakawa's work includes full annotations for individual items and informative essays on the cultural context of the collection. Asakawa's catalog is the only bibliographic record of the Yale Association of Japan Collection and is available in a few typewritten copies at Yale in the East Asian Collection and in the Bienecke Library.

### Special Card Files

Materials in rare and special collections may also be recorded in card files, which in

library practice usually are utilized as makeshift catalogs until items can be fully cataloged. A primitive card file with basic bibliographic information exists for the Laufer Collection held in the Far Eastern Department of the Field Museum. Only a typescript shelflist is available in Berkeley's East Asiatic Library for its old map collection, and its manuscript collection is represented in brief cataloging form in a card file arranged by title under the radical-stroke system.

Very few of the works in the *wahon* collection at Columbia's East Asian Library are represented in the public catalog. Most are listed in a card file, which one must request from the librarian. The *wahon* card file is arranged alphabetically by title and has no added entries or cross-references. The inadequacy of this means of bibliographical control is compounded by the fact that patrons are not allowed to enter and browse in the closed stacks where the *wahon* collection is located.

### Practices in Art Museums

Art museums have similar kinds of card files recording each museum piece. Museum cataloging and arrangement of files are, of course, designed for the use of the art historian, not the bibliographic scholar. Therefore, it may be difficult to locate textual material. However, it is worth the researcher's time to learn some of the principles of museum card files, since art collections are often repositories of written Japanese culture with Japanese books and manuscripts frequently purchased as art objects.

Art museum card files are usually arranged by periods and subdivided by genre. One might find a medieval illustrated manuscript under the heading "Muromachi-Painting." Books are somewhat easier to find since "Illustrated Books" is a common genre heading. Under this heading, for example, one finds in the card file of the Far Eastern Art Division of the Metropolitan Museum of Art a sizable selection of illustrated poetry anthologies from the Tokugawa period. In the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard the files for the regular or permanent collection, the Hofer Collection of the Printed and Graphic Arts of Asia, and selec-



tions from the Hyde Collection of Japanese Books and Manuscripts are all located in the Rubel Library. The Hofer and Hyde Collections, in particular, contain many lush examples of Buddhist and literary works from the pre-Tokugawa period.

### Bibliographies

Bibliographies of holdings of a particular collection are another form of bibliographic control. Like the printed catalog, such lists have the advantage of free circulation and distribution to interested people. In addition to being fully cataloged, the Japanese alumni collection in the Harvard Law School is represented in a complete list prepared by James Kanda.

Perhaps the most important bibliography of Japanese rare books in the United States is now being compiled by Andrew Kuroda of the Orientalia Division of the Library of Congress. All pre-Meiji imprints held in the Orientalia Division are being recorded in a comprehensive list. This undertaking is monumental since there are more than 4,000 books in this category, most of which have never been and never will be cataloged. Thus works in the Sakanishi and Asakawa collections as well as many others will be systematically recorded and made known to interested scholars for the first time.

### Exhibition Catalogs

There are other forms of guides to collections that are not comprehensive listings but should not be overlooked. One kind of selective guide is the exhibition catalog that highlights the contents of a collection. Some of these have been expanded into substantial monographs, which may be used as general reference works and scholarly treatises.

Two outstanding examples are *Japanese Botany During the Period of Wood-Block Printing*,<sup>6</sup> concerning the Bartlett Collection at Michigan, and *The Courty Tradition in Japanese Art and Literature* (Cambridge: Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, 1973) originally prepared by members of the Fogg Museum staff for a traveling exhibition of the Hofer and Hyde Collections.

Besides giving full annotations for and illustrations of works in the Bartlett Collec-

tion on exhibit in 1954 at the Clements Library of the University of Michigan, the work *Japanese Botany During the Period of Wood-Block Printing* contains essays on the history of science, and especially botany in Japan, and on the interrelated development of book publication and illustration during the Tokugawa period.

*The Courty Tradition in Japanese Art and Literature* is a masterpiece of scholarship and taste, very much in tune with the theme of the exhibit on *Nihon koten bungei*, or the refined, aristocratic tradition of arts in Japan. Consisting primarily of Buddhist and literary manuscripts and books of the pre-Tokugawa period, this exhibition catalog is a basic reference tool for literature, Buddhism, and book and art production related to the courtly tradition of Japan.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, some recommendations based on the findings of this study will be offered. While scholarly discussion on what constitutes rarity in Japanese publications would be helpful, I do not believe that universal and standard criteria of rarity should be established. Each library should decide for itself what materials ought to be singled out for "rare" or special status. Since location or pattern of storage of this material is closely related to questions of criteria, this matter should also be left to individual libraries.

Although each library has unique problems of security, the rules of access should be liberalized. Direct access to closed stacks for researchers should be allowed wherever possible, especially when a collection is not under adequate bibliographic control.

Effective bibliographic control for Japanese rare and special collections should be a high priority. Without it, these collections are virtually useless. If libraries do not have the time or lack expertise in this area, it would be desirable for the Committee on East Asian Libraries to establish a pool of consultants who could undertake such projects.

The publication of printed catalogs, exhibition catalogs, and bibliographies should be encouraged so they may be made available to interested scholars and librarians. In this regard, I strongly recommend that

Kenji Toda's descriptive catalog of the Ryerson collection be brought back into print and that Kanichi Asakawa's *Gifts of the Yale Association of Japan* be revised and published for the first time.

There are rare and pre-modern Japanese books and manuscripts throughout the

United States in East Asian libraries and in art museums. By raising the level of awareness of this material by the means that have been suggested herein, stimulating scholarly projects can be accomplished and a fundamental service to East Asian librarianship and Japanese studies can be rendered.

#### REFERENCES

1. Reports of Tsuen-hsui Tsien's surveys of rare and special collections of East Asian materials may be found in G. Raymond Nunn and Tsuen-hsui Tsien, "Far Eastern Resources in American Libraries," *Library Quarterly* 29:32-37 (Jan. 1959) and "Rarities and Specialties of East Asian Materials in American Libraries" in Tsuen-hsui Tsien, *Current Status of East Asian Collections in American Libraries: A Report for 1974/75* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Chinese Research Materials, Association of Research Libraries, 1976), p.39-47. Tsien's "Rarities and Specialties . . ." also appears in Tsuen-Hsui Tsien, "Current Status of East Asian Collections in American Libraries," *Journal of Asian Studies* 36:509-14 (May 1977).
2. Some of the cutoff dates for rarity in Japanese libraries are: in Kyoto University Library, Japanese printed works before the beginning of the Genwa period, or 1615, and manuscripts before the Keichō period, or 1596; in the National Diet Library both printed
- Japanese works and manuscripts antedating the beginning of the Keichō period, or 1596. See Chozaburo Uemura, *Toshokangaku shoshigaku jiten* (Tokyo: Yurindo, 1967), p.112-13.
3. Information concerning the East Asiatic Library was obtained for this article primarily from an unpublished paper given at the Twenty-eighth Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Toronto, Canada, March 19-21, 1976: Eiji Yutani, "Japanese Rare Books and Special Collections in the East Asiatic Library, University of California, Berkeley: A Preliminary Survey."
4. *The New York Public Library's Dictionary Catalog and Shelf List of the Spencer Collection of Illustrated Books and Manuscripts* (Boston: G. H. Hall, 1971), 1:iii.
5. *Ibid.*, 2:917-31, 943-61.
6. Harley Harris Bartlett and Hide Shohara, "Japanese Botany During the Period of Wood-Block Printing" in *The Asa Gray Bulletin*, n.s. 3, nos.3-4 (Spring 1961).