

Report of the NCC Executive Director Activities
NCC Business Trip to Japan
June 11 – July 31, 2008

Overview

This report augments that given by the Chair, which summarizes meetings made together by the NCC Chair and Executive Director. My stay in Japan was long and there were many meetings. I have tried to summarize here only those meetings that have potential direct implications for NCC.

Dinner with John Campbell, June 14th

John Campbell, former NCC SS faculty member is now retired from Michigan in living in Hiroo. He runs a social sciences kenkyukai in Tokyo that might be a venue or collaborator for future workshops or programs. John is also actively trying to get IHJ more involved in the academic world. IHJ no longer runs any PhD Kenkyukai as it used to do. Those have now been taken over by John's group, another at the DIJ (German Institute), and the group run by David Slater at Sophia in anthropology and public culture.

John suggested that I meet with IHJ staff to try to help them think about new strategies for attracting academics, especially younger foreign academics.

Dinner with Robert Skipp Orr in Kamakura, June 28th

Skipp Orr, retired President of Boeing Japan; President, Panasonic Foundation; and Senior Foreign Policy Advisor to Barak Obama.

We had dinner at a favorite Izakaya of the Orr's in Kamakura where they live. Skipp was about to leave for Europe to do advance work for Obama's Berlin Speech. If Obama is elected it is likely that Skipp will have a major post likely connected to the EU.

As a long time Japan hand Skipp was interested in NCC activities and glad to hear both about the IUP and the recent E-R Workshop in his native Florida. Skipp is a graduate of Florida International University and Columbia PhD in politics. Skipp has many connections in Tokyo and can be a great asset for NCC in future fund raising efforts and by providing introductions.

Lunch with Keiji Shono, JF July 1st

Keiji Shono was the deputy director of JFNY for several years and worked closely with NCC during that time. He is now director of education at the JF's Kansai language center at which he is responsible for developing Japanese language instructional materials.

JF is doing some contract work for the Japanese government in training Indonesian nurses and caregivers and has developed a database of medical and health care terms. They are anxious to publicize it within the medical field. They also have a new two-year project to develop a Japanese language program based on Manga and Anime. The current fiscal year (through 3/31/09) is for concept development and creation of some

showcase units for fund-raising purposes with the development of the materials to take place during the following fiscal year (through 3/31/10).

Shono-san was particularly interested in talking to me about the IUP Conference, which had just taken place, and to learn about contacts in the manga and anime world. He and his staff are anxious to stay in touch with NCC on this project.

During his tenure at JFNY Shono-san asked NCC to do several small projects to distribute materials or publicize activities and he clearly looks to us as a potential partner in advancing some of the projects he is now engaged in.

Dinner with Izumi Koide and Akio Yasue, July 8th

We had Indian dinner near Waseda and the evening turned into a detailed follow up on the conference. We discussed the various publications forthcoming and reviewed logistics for the detailed summary report that Yasue-san will write. They also strongly suggested that NCC propose a roundtable for the AAS.

Other topics of conversation included the need for NCC to have a Japanese bank account and how it might be listed with an address. Izumi suggested that many foreigners have used IHJ as their address in Japan and the key presently would be finding the right IHJ staff member to serve as the contact person to collection the mail and so forth.

Izumi also spoke about Tokyo Club members. She suggested that we should think of the older IHJ members we know and assume they are in the Tokyo Club. She especially mentioned Hiroshi Matsumoto as a member we should cultivate.

Dinner with Glenda Roberts, July 10th

Glenda Roberts is a professor at Waseda teaching in their International Studies program and is very interested in doing more with library information for herself and her students. We should think of Waseda as a good venue for possible programs. Glenda also has two graduate students working in medical anthropology who are interested in the Japan Foundation's nurse training project and Shono-san was happy to make the connection with Glenda and her students.

Meeting with Tomoko Seki at TIFO, July 11th

I visited Tomoko Seki at the Toshiba Headquarters to report on the IUP Conference and to plan for future projects. TIFO is interested in the IUP efforts and eager to support broader publicity in the coming years. We now have a good connection with them and if we have projects they are interested in support at the ¥1,000,000 level. Their annual application deadline is November with notification in March. Seki-san suggested that we should have an interim report to them on IUP by sometime in late September or October for the board to have in hand before proposal reading time.

I also mentioned the 3-D conference to Seki-san. She noted that given its time frame we would have to apply for support in November 2008 and she advised that we might wish to stay with asking them for more money to support IUP publicity and workshops.

Lunch with Junko Kurita of JF Library, July 14th

I met Junko Kurita at the Japan Foundation's new offices and got to see the library in nearly complete state just before the opening of the new headquarters. Junko is frustrated with the small space allocated to the library but glad that it once again has a much more accessible location on the first floor directly off the lobby. She would be willing to assist if NCC were to offer programs at JF's new headquarters.

Meeting with Y. Ikuhara, past Deputy Director of NDL, July 15th

After our meeting at NDL I emailed Ikuhara-san who retired from NDL late last fall. Shortly before his retirement Tokiko and I had spoken to him about future librarian training needs and discussed possible strategies for collaboration.

Mr. Ikuhara was delighted to get an informal update on the June 24th meeting at NDL and he expressed his interest in volunteering to help future training programs. Now in retirement he is not working full time because his wife is ill and requires some assistance and so he finds that he has time that he could productively contribute to these efforts on a volunteer basis.

NCC needs to devise a way to make his interest known to Motoyoshi-san and others at NDL who are interested in training and to Hayashi-san at IHJ. We need to determine the best strategy for this follow up.

Japan Foundation Reception July 16th

A Gala Reception was held in the Japan Foundation's new headquarters in Yotsuya 4-chome. There were probably 100 people there mostly elderly and erai Japanese with a smattering of consular officials from Europe and Africa. I may have been the only American there. The usual celebratory toasts were given and the new facility was beautifully decked out to showcase Japan Foundation programs. The Information Center (& library) looked beautiful and the meeting spaces were nicely decked out with posters on JF programs and video monitors of their language programs. The public spaces are very attractive and should for the most part be very well used. JF staff members tell me that the office space upstairs is more cramped than their previous facility and the move occasioned the disposal of many old documents and records. This also included the transfer of many catalogs to NACT (as noted in Mariko Shiratori's report).

The neighborhood is excellent and there will soon be a large Korean Cultural Center next door. There is also a nice Tokyu Stays hotel nearby that JF is using. As Tokiko noted Ms. Yamamoto offered to let NCC use JF space if it is not being used by the foundation and suggested we check Tokyu Stays (which we visited).

Meeting with Stephen Snyder, July 21st

We met Steve Snyder in Harajuku for a stroll and coffee during which time he told us about his current activities with the "PEN Club" translation project funded lavishly by the Bunkacho. This is a very large and well funded project that is currently having difficulties in selection of the books to be translated. Originally there was a group of

senior Japanese members and a parallel group of foreign academic advisors. The two sides did not work well together and the foreign group, originally headed by Paul Anderer disbanded. Stephen Snyder is now an advisor to the Japan side and is one of the foreign scholars spearheading the re-formation of a foreign scholarly advisory group.

This is a project about which questions have been raised at NCC and one that we need to follow. It has important impact on the field and also is of concern to many in the literary field because the choices about works to translate will have such an impact on how Japanese literature of a given period or genre will be seen by foreign readers.

Dinner with Syun Tutiya, July 22nd

I met former Japan Liaison Syun Tutiya in Shinjuku for dinner. He is his usual energetic self. He reports that Mr. Oba at Hitotsubashi University is the new head of the JANUL Committee that coordinates GIF on the Japan side and that Mr. Inoue, who recently moved to Nagoya University, continues to be project coordinator. NCC needs to arrange ways for ILL/DD members to get together with their Japan side colleagues. I understand that Chiaki Sakai, Hitoshi Kamada and Hiro Good all hope to be in Japan in November and I hope they will arrange a gathering. NCC will be able to provide some support.

Tutiya-san was also strong in his encouragement that NCC work to involve more young librarians. He was glad to hear I had plans to meet with Shinobu Murai (Hitotsubashi) and Kyoko Mori (Todai) two young librarians who Tutiya-san is most anxious that NCC involve in projects. Both have been active in the past and both have just agreed to join the task force reviewing and upgrading the Information literacy portal.

Visit to Shibusawa Museum and Foundation, July 23rd

Ted and I were invited to visit Shibusawa where we met with staff and discussed future programs. They will be having another traveling exhibition to China and the US in St. Louis in September and October 2009. They may visit other locations in conjunction with that exhibition including Harvard where another workshop may be arranged. We also had a tour of their facilities and saw their current exhibition on the Ambassador Dolls. Shibusawa's facilities might be a good location for a future workshop or conference and there seems to be interest if the topic were right.

An important part of the visit was meeting Jun'etsu Komatsu again. Mr. Komatsu is a former senior Japan Foundation official who is now the Managing Director of Shibusawa. I thanked him for Shibusawa's collaboration on the IUP project and he expressed their support and interest in future collaborations. He clearly sees the IUP as an important project for them to be involved in and values Koide-san's continued involvement with NCC.

Meeting at IHJ, July 24th

I received a phone call from Junko Ikeda of the IHJ program staff inviting me to meet with here and Rie Hayashi when Hayashi-san returned from her vacation. I met with them at IHJ on July 24th. As Ikeda-san noted, John Campbell has suggested that she talk with me to get ideas about ways that IHJ could attract young scholars in Japanese studies.

I had hoped that the meeting would be a chance to meet Fukumoto, the current managing director of IHJ but he was not available. I made the point of profusely thanking IHJ and especially the library and Hayashi-san for all the help in arranging the IUP Conference. I reiterated NCC's hope that there will be future opportunities to collaborate with IHJ on conferences and other programs. We spoke about the JSIST program in the past and I expressed the need for IHJ to be an important part of future kenshu programs.

I came away from the meeting feeling as if it was merely an exercise on Ikeda-san's part. They recognize that membership fees keep younger scholars from joining and other groups have succeeded IHJ in offering kenkyukai. Also it seemed that the management of IHJ does not see the value of the library. It is not hard to understand why they feel that way; on my 8-10 visits to IHJ, each with a brief visit to the library, I never saw more than one or two patrons at a time (if that) and more than once the visitor was only there to sleep. NCC may be able to play an important role in helping to revitalize the image of the library.

Dinner with Shinobu Murai and Kyoko Mori, July 24th

I met Shinobu and Kyoko in Waseda and we had dinner at an Izakaya near campus. Both are doing well. Shinobu is finishing up her Masters at Keio and deciding whether or not to go on for her PhD in library science. She continues to work in the same job at Hitotsubashi. Kyoko recently was transferred to the Physics library at Todai. It is a small library and very much the preserve of the faculty who make all the collection decisions. We discussed possible ways that she might work with JST on future workshops. Both have since agreed to join the IL Portal Task Force.

Meeting with Makoto Nakamoto, Waseda University Library, July 28th

I visited Makoto Nakamoto at his office at Waseda University Library. He is now deputy university librarian for administration at Waseda. Mr. Nakamoto was one of the younger librarians who attended the Year 2000 Conference and still in his early 50s he will be a leader in the field for sometime to come. He was interested to get an update on NCC activities and happy to brag about Waseda's excellent statistics on ILL. He would be very interested in taking part in the 3-D Conference.

Dinner with Tatsuya Tanami Managing Director, Nippon Foundation, July 29th

Tatsuya Tanami who was until 1999 Program Director at International House of Japan and is an old family friend, invited Ted and me to dinner on July 29th. Tanami-san has been at Nippon Foundation just about 10 years and is now the personal advisor to the Chairman Yohei Sasakawa.

We discussed Nippon Foundation's past important work on senior citizen and handicapped services in Japan, UNESCO and development work in Africa including important efforts on behalf of leprosy eradication. Tanami-san noted the important role in these efforts of past Foundation Chair Sono Ayako, the conservative author, who retired from the Foundation about 3 years ago.

Now Yohei Sasakawa is chair and he has a greater interest in US-Japan cultural relations. Recently the Foundation supported the rebuilding of Japanese studies in Great Britain with 13 grants to 12 institutions to give seed money to start positions. Now Tanami-san wants to explore ways to support Japanese studies in the US. He is looking for broad impact, does not want to give to the usual suspects (not to TT) and is aware of the need for more support of smaller institutions and those in the South and Mid-West. He asked me to think about things and to send him some ideas. He seemed particularly intrigued by the need for training librarians who serve JS faculty but who are not themselves Japanese specialists.

The current 100 Books project is also one of Mr. Tanami's projects and he is hopeful that the books will find use in more rural areas of the US and in small institutions.

We also talked about IHJ and he mentioned that Mr. Fukumoto had been the head of Osaka International House and involved in civil society activities in the Kansai. So the move to IHJ is a big step. He also spoke positively about Mr. Ogawa at Japan Foundation.