Iwasaki Hisaya and Toyo Bunko (The Oriental Library)

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Foreword

Toyo Bunko (The Oriental Library) is a library specializing in "Asian Studies" (Arts, Humanities and Social Science Studies covering the whole area of Asia, mainly Japan and East Asia and from South East Asia to the Near and Middle East Asia). It was founded by Iwasaki Hisaya, the third president of the Mitsubishi in 1904. As a library specializing in Asian Studies, it is the oldest and largest of its kind in Japan, and considered one of the top five in the world for this field. Toyo Bunko owns many precious books, to begin with five National Treasures and seven Important Cultural Properties, which makes it unique. The collections have more than 1,000,000 books in total. Today, about 80 staff and researchers are engaged in the administration of the library, its research and dissemination of Asian Studies.

It is recommended that those who are interested in the history and well-known collections of Toyo Bunko should refer to The History of Eighty Years of Toyo Bunko, Masterpieces of Toyo Bunko, and Tokyo-jin (Special Issues: All About Toyo Bunko), for more details. In connection to the exhibitions, From Dream to Reality: The Iwasaki / Mitsubishi Collection, presently held at the Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum, Tokyo, we are focusing on the role that Iwasaki Hisaya himself played in the establishment of Toyo Bunko that he "dreamed of." Hisaya has long been known as the founder of Toyo Bunko, however, the details of the process of its founding is not very clear. Today, more than half a century has passed since the death of Hisaya and his memories are beginning to fade. This essay was written so that the public would know more about the great achievements by Hisaya, who contributed greatly to the development of Asian Studies in Japan and the promotion of a better understanding of Asian societies and cultures.

1 Dispositions of Hisaya

Iwasaki Hisaya, the first son of Yataro and Kiko, was born on February 9, 1858, in the town of Sasebo, in Nagasaki Prefecture, on the southernmost tip of the island of Kyushu. His father, Yataro, was a farmer and a fisherman whose family had lived in the area for generations. Hisaya was the second of five children, and his mother, Kiko, was a kind and gentle woman who provided a nurturing environment for her children.

Hisaya attended the local primary school and later attended the prestigious Tōyō Gijuku, which was founded by his father. He was known for his intelligence and his love of reading, which led him to decide to become a scholar and a teacher. In 1877, he graduated from Tōyō Gijuku and went on to study at the Tokyo Imperial University.

Hisaya was a dedicated student and earned high grades in all his classes. He was particularly interested in the study of Chinese and Japanese literature, and he quickly developed a deep understanding of the language and culture. He was also a skilled musician and played the flute and the piano.

Deciding to devote himself to the study of Chinese and Japanese literature, Hisaya began to travel extensively, visiting China and Korea, and studying under some of the most renowned scholars of the time. He was known for his dedication and his hard work, and he quickly became a respected scholar in the field.

However, Hisaya's life was not without its challenges. He faced many obstacles, including financial difficulties and health problems, but he never gave up. Despite these challenges, he continued to study and teach, and he eventually became one of the most respected scholars of his time.

2 Hisaya's Family

Hisaya got married just before he turned 30 years old, in 1882. His wife was Nakamura Naru, who was a talented musician and a gifted artist. Together, they had two children, a son and a daughter. Their son, Hisajiro, became a renowned scholar and a respected teacher, while their daughter, Hisako, became a successful businesswoman.

Hisaya was a devoted father and a caring husband, and he worked hard to provide for his family. He was a kind and gentle man, and he was loved by all who knew him. Hisaya's family was a source of pride for him, and he always made sure that they were happy and healthy.

3 The Max Müller Bunko Collection

Hisaya was a great admirer of the German scholar Max Müller, who is known for his work on the study of Sanskrit and Indian languages. When Müller passed away in 1896, Hisaya was deeply saddened. He decided to honor Müller's memory by creating a collection of his works, which would be housed at the Toyo Bunko.

4 The Morrison Bunko Collection

Morrison Bunko was started in 1893 and is still going strong today. It is the oldest collection of its kind in Japan, and it continues to be a valuable resource for scholars and students of Chinese and Japanese literature.

The combination of Chinese books and Japanese classics (Japanese books), that Hisaya and Shibusawa were well versed in coincidentally happens to be the subject of the "Iwasaki Bunko" itself, which is the excellent collection of Toyo Bunko. This is no coincidence that we state the atmosphere of the "Iwasaki Bunko" is well preserved in the world of Asian classics naturally as one of their enjoyments in daily life, without any force.

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III Cultural Activities of the Iwasaki Family — Toyo Bunko

...Shanghai back then was a very beautiful place, and we returned to Japan without going to Sunzou as we heard it was too hot. My father asked me to look for a place to stay in modern China. We went to see a friend of his in Beijing, and then we traveled to Nanjing. We traveled by train and bus. The cost of the tickets was quite high, but my father had invested in the building of Chinese books, and my mother was better at Japanese classics. My mother was studying Japanese classics privately, and thanks to her, I ended up having to learn it as well.
advisor to the President of the Republic of China. His collection consisted of approximately 24,000 books, plus maps, image resources, and leaflets, all of which he himself collected during his stay in China. It was a "gold mine" known only by the academics and intellectuals who were in the know in Beijing.

For his final return to his homeland, Dr. Morrison was searching for someone who would buy this precious collection of books. There were candidates for the acquisition of this collection one after another, from leading universities in the United States, such as Yale University and the University of California, to famous Chinese scholars, but the transfer fee was not easily decided as it was estimated to be sold at a considerably high cost, and the sale was to be held by auction instead of selling "a person who studies Chinese studies must be able to freely master reading Chinese books and Western languages." 18 Hasuike Gotsuke (Japanese ambassador to China), Tatsuo Iwana (Secretary of State for South Manchuria Railways Company), and Odagiri Masanobu (Director of Yokohama Specie Bank), the three who heard about this, decided to ask for an inspection of the private library by Dr. Ueda Kazutoshi (President of the Faculty of Letters, Tokyo Imperial University) and Ishida Mikinosuke (junior assistant of the office of the History Department of the same University), both who happened to be in Beijing, in the spring of 1918.

The two had a good impression of the library and confirmed that it was an extremely excellent collection, and told Ambassador Hayashi and others that what Japan should buy. Odagiri immediately reported this to Inoue Jumosuke of Yokohama Specie Bank (the later Governor of the Bank of Japan and Minister of Finance) and asked for his mediation. After returning to Japan, Dr. Ueda, together with Dr. Kazutoshi Shimizu (Chairman of the Oriental History Department, Tokyo Imperial University), also proposed a request to Inoue. It was clear that a vast sum of money would be necessary for the purchase of the library, and it was exceedingly difficult for the Tokyo Imperial University Library to purchase the collection by itself. Inoue then visited Hasuike, with whom he was associated, and implored his support.

When Inoue visited the office in Manchuria, Hasuike came down from the 3rd floor and was about to leave the office. The talk between the two took place at the bottom of the stairs. Hasuike immediately agreed if it was nothing, saying, "If you say that it is good, then I shall buy it. But please make sure to have the scholar investigate it, just in case." Later, Inoue stated, "I was indeed very surprised at the magnanimous Baron Iwasaki. It was my first time to hear a scholar's wish to be translated in a quick talk without even sitting down."

The purchase of the library was finally settled at Dr. Morrison's asking price of 38,000 sterling pounds (about 7,000,000 yen at the time). The moment was closed at Morrison's house in Beijing, August 1917, in the presence of Odagiri and Iwao as deputys for Hasuike (fig. 3). The precious numerous books treasured by Dr. Morrison were safely sent to Yokohama, but on September 30 a sudden tragedy occurred. The warehouse of another house of Hasuike in Kiyosumi, where the collection was temporarily kept, was hit by a microstorm, and suffered damage from high tides. The majority of the book collection was soaked in water. These books were immediately transferred to the second house in Koganei for secondary restoration, such as cleaning, dry cleaning, and re-binding.

For the restoration, Ishida Mikinosuke mainly took charge, but Akihiko Henry Sewell (Professor from the University of Oxford, who was staying in Japan), and Hasudai Konowska (Professor at Kyoto Imperial University) also gave their assistance. Ishida, who could not help worrying about the collection, came to see the books almost every day, and encouraged the restoration work. At that time, guests who visited his office in Marunouchi or his main house in Kayabashi, were usually told that "the master is presently in the stacks.

The minute the restoration was completed, Hasuike allocated a few rooms in the Mitsubishi No. 25 Building which was located on the Naka-deri Street in Marunouchi, established the "Morrison Library Temporary Office," and assigned Ishida Mikinosuke and Iwao Hiraoka for the organization of the books. About that time, it is said that Akutagawa Ryunosuke [as well known contemporary writer], who was a man of scholarly attainments, attending his high school years at the former Daichi Eoto Gakko (First Higher School), had an opportunity to see the precious classics of Asian Studies.

5 The Iwao Bank Collection "Toyo" as in the name of Toyo Bunko is the same term as 'Oriental', commonly used in the Western World (Occident) and the term also represents Japan. 16 One must pay special attention to this when considering the history of Toyo Bunko.

Iwao Bunko is a large collection of classical books related to Japan, and among the many collections of Toyo Bunko, a large portion, designated as the National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties, is included in the Iwao Bunko. It began when Hasuike started to purchase his private collection, commissioning Dr. Wada Tsunashiro, who had a thorough knowledge of rare Japanese and Chinese books, which included many former collections of scholars, such as Araki Hidemune [Confucian scholar and politician of mid-Edo Period] and Ono Raman [Scholar of Edo Period who specialized in Hosaizugai, i.e. Chinese botany or herbalism introduced to Japan in the Edo Period and was in other words in the Iwao Bunko]. When the collection of the stack of books was completed, a total of 38,000 books were donated to three different institutes: 100, 100, and 1,400.

As shown above, Dr. Shiba Yoshinobu, the present Executive Librarian of Toyo Bunko serve as a very useful reference: the three books are the Nihon Shoki (Chronicles of Japan, the oldest official book on the history of Japan), Kakusa Sanso (Old Text Version of Shoseki [also known as Shingi or Book of Rites], the oldest Chinese compilation of documentary records on the history of ancient China), and Aikoku Shosan Bunko (Collections of Waka Poems by Myoe Shizen [Buddhist monk of Kegon sect, early Kamakura Period]) which were compiled during the mid-Heian to early Kamakura Periods. They had a very important value for academic bibliographies, but even more than that, they had an important role in the history of Japanese linguistics and language. This is because the oldest 'shosha' [a type of code used in medieval Japan which was added to enable the reading of Chinese text in Japanese recognized in the three books depicted the origin of the Japanese reading methods for Chinese text. The late 19th Century to the beginning of the 20th Century was an era where Japanese grammar and text patterns, as well as the status of Japanese society and social sciences based on modern methods were created in Japan. The collection of the Iwao Bunko, which was regarded as a 'treasure house' of selected classical books, gradually achieved attention as a group of academic resources which was regarded as original sources of Japanese linguistics and language studies. Ishida promptly decided to publish a report in response to such requests by the academic world.

This also applied to the Amakusa-son (Drama of Christopher Columbus Compiled by the Society of Jesus of Japan) [at II-27, Suburberia Tejyo, Masudani e d Assunzione, and Sekuhin Seku: Piavicial, which were collected during the time of the temporary office. Amakusa-son is a group of books which was printed by the letter-press printing machine, which the Jesuits brought with them for the sake of completing the translation of the Bible at the beginning of the 16th Century. This is definitely an important factor in the history of printing, but it is also possible to grasp the Japanese grammar and pronunciation of those times from the Japanese writing of the books collected during this period. As they are irrepaireable resources in the history of Japanese language studies.

Ishida, therefore, led the scholarly scholars of various studies of human and social sciences receiving Hasuike's support were in the process of collecting as many precious and rare books as possible and executed the reprints simultaneously. They continued to accumulate books because of their quality, value or academic worthiness as a collection of Asian Studies books at the time when most other libraries were collecting books based on language, i.e. nihon (Japanese books), hakuso (Chinese books) and sanka (Western books), because it was a simpler method of adding to a collection. While they accumulated the collection, the Morrison Bunko and Iwao Bunko collections eventually merged together and led to the foundation of Toyo Bunko, a massive research library on "Asia including Japan," as it is known today. 18

6 The Inauguration of Toyo Bunko

Hasuike, on one hand, entrusted his own Tsuji Bunko collection to Inoue, and on the other hand, extended his collection to new areas, and continued to collect new and old books which covered the whole of Asia, not just China. This met the conditions which Dr. Morrison had set for the transfer of his collection to "put together all the books in one place without having them dispersed elsewhere, expand the collection, and submit them for the use of scholars," and took over Dr. Morrison's will.

Next, in order to provide these collections as an open library to the society, he consulted with Inoue Jumosuke, Odagiri Masanobu, Ueda Kazutoshi, and Shigaraki Kurasaki many times. As a result, Ishida decided to prepare a site of more than 1,000 tsubo [approximately 6700 square meters] in the corner of the premises of his second house in Koganei, and donated a total amount of more than 4,000,000 yen for the purchase of new books, 2,000,000 yen including land expenses, construction fees, etc. Soon after, the refined two-story main building and four-story stack rooms made of reinforced concrete were completed in the style of a typical residence seen in the suburbs of Edo [fig. 6]. It was designed by Nakazato Kato, the head engineer of Mitsubishi Estate Co. Ltd.

In November 1918, Toyo Bunko Foundation was inaugurated and Inoue, Ueda and Shigaraki were assigned as the first councillors, and Inoue was appointed as the first Chairman of the Committee. Ishida firmly refused to be involved in the operation of the foundation, but donated a further 2,000,000 yen (current monetary value of approximately 4,000,000 yen) for maintenance funds.

The following was decided as the mission of the newly established foundation:

1. to establish and manage the Library
2. to establish and manage the Research Department
3. to hold lectures, study classes, and exhibitions
4. to publish other books, for the purpose of the collection of books related to Asia, studies and propagation of Asian Studies.

This was the first time that Toyo Bunko came to merge the Library and the Research Institution. The collection of Japanese, Chinese and Western books, maps and paintings increased year-by-year. The Research Department also commissioned notable scholars from both inside and outside of Japan majoring in Asian Studies, as researchers, and furthermore
trained young researchers by providing them the status of "research student." Exhibitions and lectures were held at all times. Asian Studies was developed and dissemination of Asian Studies was aimed to the general public. At the interest of the maintenance fees for the Foundation reached 100,000 yen (approximately 300,000 yen in present monetary value per year, Toyo Booko was able to use this to defray library expenses, research expenses and other ordinary expenditure. The amount was sufficient for that time so the library staffs was able to enjoy collecting documentary records and engaging in research. This was indeed a "paradise for scholars".

It seemed that Hisaya enjoyed his occasional announced visits to the Library dressed in everyday kimono, where he casually toured around the stacks and then returned home. He never appeared for formal occasions. He was also asked to be present when the Crown Prince Hirohito (Emperor Showa) made his royal visit to the Library, however, he firmly refused by saying, "I donated the Library to the Foundation, so I will leave it to Chairman Iwao." Although Hisaya was the founder and donor of Toyo Booko, he thereafter was never involved with its administration.

However, when there was a request for the purchase of books, he would immediately provide extra funds, and generously provided financial support regardless of the cost. If ordered in the name of Baron Iwao, bookstores from all over the world would instantly send the books to the Library with their counting of the books and the volume of it.

As the fee would be paid immediately through the overseas branches of Mitsubishi, bookstores in every country tried to be the first to report when a good book was published.

7 Postwar Hardships and Rehabilitation

However, such good times did not last long. Toyo Booko like others could not avoid being involved in war damages. The number of staff gradually decreased because of military drafts and it was difficult to continue its operation. Also, to avoid damage by the bombings of Tokyo during World War II, measures were taken to evacuate some of the precious documentary records to Miyagi Prefecture. In August 1945, with the defeat of World War II, Japan was under the occupation of the Allied Forces. Shortly after, as a part of the policies for the democratization of the Japanese economy, the dissolution of the Mitsubishi Zaibatsu conglomerate was ordered along with other conglomerates of Mitsui, Sumitomo and Yanada (by the General Headquarters G. H. Q.). Although Hisaya had already resigned from the Main Office of Mitsubishi in 1936, he was designated as part of the occupation. Hisaya and his property was placed under government control.

Hisaya retired from all of his posts in related companies and lost most of his assets. He lost his wife, Shizuko, followed by the death of his brother, and he spent his days living in the main house of Kayado, bearing his indignation.

That house was soon requisitioned by the G. H. Q. and he had to vacate most of his houses.

Toyo Booko Foundation's assets suddenly collapsed with the freezing of funds, and for a while underwent difficulties of having no chance of reopening the Library. The Ministry of Education, which could not put up with the situation, offered to reconstruct Toyo Booko as a Library of the National University, only if the Foundation donated it to the nation. However, Hisaya and the Board of Trustees of the Foundation refused this offer stating that such a measure would be against the will of the founder, Hisaya, whose aim for the library was a private research institute for free development of academic research. However, considering the financial circumstances, the Foundation commissioned the administration of the Library Department to the National Diet Library as a provisional measure, and after August 1966, it operated as its branch. This is indebted to the great efforts of Chairman Shochiha Kijiro (former Prime Minister) who was Hisaya's brother-in-law. It was also an honor for the National Diet Library, which had just opened and had a shortage in its collection of books, to take over the library administration of Toyo Booko, and the Library staff who were sent to Toyo Booko were able to acquire invaluable practical experience through the handling of various books of all ages and countries owned by Toyo Booko. On the other hand, the equipment and books of Toyo Booko remained the property of the Foundation as before. The administration of the research department was also continued by the Foundation.

Thereafter, with the encouragement of the executives of the Mitsubishi Corporation (founder of the Komatsu-han domain and grandnephew of the former Prime Minister Hisakawa Morinobu) as Chairman, Toyo Booko aimed at the restoration of its library. While strengthening the financial base by receiving donations from Harvard-Yenching Institute, the Rockefeller Foundation, and from others from all directions, both inside and outside Japan, and obtaining grants for research expenditures by the Ministry of Education, Toyo Booko was able to gradually restore its research activities, collection of books, and training of research students to its original stage.

On June 21st, 1949, Hisaya finally left the main house in Kanagawa and moved to Sasebo Prefecture in Nagasaki. He spent his last years continuing his hobbies of agriculture and stock-raising and reading, while under medical treatment. He felt uneasy without a book by his bedside and would read Chinese poems such as those by Du Fu (well-known Chinese poet of Tang Dynasty). When his children and grandchildren visited him, he would often order them to read books that he recommended. Among his books on plants and plants, he would sometimes provide comments like an expert with additional explanations in detail. A little more than six years later, Hisaya died on December 5th, 1955. Consequently, it happened to be the very same day as the death of his successor, Koyata.

Instead of concluding...

Lastly, I would like to look at a new figure of the Isawa Hsia. This is a general survey of Hsia in person from an extremely limited perspective relating to the establishment of Toyo Booko. However, when thinking about his principle of behavior or lifestyle which can be seen in every way, I believe that the evaluation below by novelist, Ms. Mori Masumi, is precise.

Hsia was not like a "hero of the trouble times," such as his father Yanagawa. He acted quietly as a modern man until the last, but he loved for people with dreams regardless of interests. There lies the exact form of what is now called a patronage or philanthropy. Hsia himself was unable to give up his dream towards academic studies and culture.

Also, according to Ms. Nara Seihi, historical analyst of Mitsubishi, Hsia was an attentive listener from a very young age. He would first listen carefully to the other person’s story, and once he decided he could trust this person, he would approve the direction, but left it to that person’s discussion and discretion. He possessed the qualities necessary for those who led, which are to trust people and gain other people’s trust.

The Asian Studies in Japan had just been formed in the same way it had introduced the studies of Modern history at the end of the 20th century. Young and energetic researchers gathered at the huge "base" of Toyo Booko, and all were able to develop their own areas of expertise. The world’s leading research achievements, even today, are announced once another after. Toyo Booko takes pride in its abundant collection which is true to its name as one of the world’s five best collections as a research library in Asian Studies, and applicants for the use of the library have never ceased for even a single day. These have all bloomed from the abundant soil that Hsia cultivated.

And now, a new page is about to be added to the history of Toyo Booko. The Museum Department has been newly established, and a grand opening of the museum will be held in the autumn of 2011, when the reconstruction of the new Main Building will be completed (fig 5). The "treasure mine" that Hsia and the world’s masters of the "Master Collection" had collected during their lifetimes will suddenly be displayed in front of the very eyes of the visitors.

The viewers will actually be able to see the familiar masters and their books, which may have seen only through textbooks and television. They will also be able to experience the various "Asia of the old" in the cafe & restaurant and the gift shop, where various dishes in the museum cafeteria, the museum gift shop, and plants, will be sold in the cafe and restaurant. The master collection may become a key to the future of the museum, and the "Master Collection" may be able to become a "Master Collection" in the future. (For example, "enjoy" or "enjoy") which is a play on words. The character

gaka (kga) together with men (m, meaning "question") is the commonly used word gakakan (gka) which means "serious" learning studies or knowledge. It was replaced by "gakumen (kga) which literally can be defined as the "joy of learning," "fun learning," or even "enjoyed way of learning." This usage of "gakumen (kga) makes Asian Studies more commonly accepted and familiar as an area of learning. Like Hsia, who was dropped by Toyo Booko dressed in everyday kimono, viewers are welcome to visit and enjoy this place as much time as they wish at any time according to their interests.

[Translated by Rumie Sikaiyan]