

Transcript of Interview with Sachie Noguchi (May 24, 2019) Riverside Dr. New York City

F: I'm Fabiano Rocha, Japan Studies Librarian at the University of Toronto, and today I'm here to interview Sachie Noguchi, former Japanese Studies Librarian of Columbia University, for the NCC Multimedia History Project. Hi, Sachie.

S: Hi.

F: Thank you for making time to meet us today. So, we're going to dive right into the questions. The first question we have for you is: Tell us something about your background, where you were born, and where you grew up.

S: Okay. I was born in Tokyo, Nakameguro (中目黒), but that was my mother's *jikka* (childhood home). And then after a few months I moved to Tokyo. Because that house was burned down by B-29, (F: Oh wow) the last B-29 of that fleet. And so, we emigrated to Gunma Prefecture where is my father's hometown. And then I grew up until the end of elementary school in Gunma, a very, very tiny place. And then, because once the *Eigo*--English Language--start, my mother thought, I cannot catch up to the level of Tokyo's English, and Gunma's level of *Eigo*, so before I start English they thought it would be better to send me to Tokyo.

F: I see.

S: So, I have an entrance exam at junior high school, and fortunately I passed, so from Junior High School on, I was in Tokyo until the end of my higher education. And after that I started to work in Tokyo too. So mainly my life is in Tokyo, but my childhood is in Gunma. And, of course, I have Gunma is my hometown, so I have many Gunma elementary school friends too.

F: And in Tokyo you went to Keio University?

S: Keio University, and after graduating from Keio, I was working at the Institute of Behavioral Sciences.

F: I see.

S: Which is today it's normal, but it was using computer technology to process a large number of statistics, and actually that Institution was built by Hitachi Electric Company, which needed to sell their computers, so we started from high tech, which is one level of computer, and then, by the time I left the institution, I'm not sure which machine they were using. But anyways, so I was always working with some people who were making data, some people using data, and some who were doing research.

F: Oh, I see. And so, after living sometime in Tokyo, then your next step was coming to North America?

S: Um hmm, But before that I have two big incidences, during when I was working, because the Japanese Government had two programs. One is Japanese Goodwill Mission, which is commemorating the former Heisei Emperor's marriage as a prince. So, at that time Japan was too poor to send those young people to overseas, so the government set a program and sent a certain number of people every year to various countries of the world.

F: I see.

S: So, I was from Gunma, I applied for that exam. And I was sent to South America. I went to first was, actually it was 1969 and it was one year before the Osaka Banpaku, the 1970's World Exposition so to promote that event we were sent San Francisco and joined the parade, Japan Parade or something like that. Then, after that we went to Brazil as the first country. In Brazil, I visited Rio de Janeiro first. Rio then we went to Brasilia, then to São Paulo.

F: It's amazing you have been to Brasilia. Because I have never been.

S: Really?

F: I was born and raised in Brazil. But, I need to go next time.

S: Yeah. At that time, when I was there, in 1969, there was nine satellite cities, maybe today more than a hundred satellite cities, I guess. But anyway, so I was in impressed by Oscar Niemeyer's (1907–2012) architecture and things.

F: Very iconic.

S: And then another of the instances after I came back from that one, Japanese government had a conflict with Southeast Asia, so they built another program, which was Symposium for Southeast Asian youth. Japan's is a host country invited from 5 other countries, and from each country 30 male and female, totally 30 young people were invited, so I joined that program, and I went to Southeast Asia. Before that, in addition to Brazil I went to Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru. Peru was the primary visiting country, so we needed to stay at least 2 weeks. So, we went to Lima, then we went to Trujillo (?), and come back to Lima, and then, that sort of detailed ravel.

F: So, if I remember correctly, recently you had a big reunion with some of the cohort?

S: That was Symposium for Southeast Asian Youth. This year is the last one, probably. We will have that reunion in Singapore in October.

F: So, you're planning to go, as well?

S: Yeah

F: Oh, that's great.

S: I am participating from Japan. And so that probably quite a big boom, so that could come to my reason for why I came to Canada.

F: Oh, I see. And then moving on to the next question, can you tell us a little about your experience living in Canada, and I guess you also studied in Canada, correct?

S: Yeah. Actually, I went to Canada for study as a UBC's graduate student. I did Sociology, but in terms of Sociology, but social development, regional development. I did economical aspect included type of subject. So, I did my Master's Degree in that field, and after that, if I didn't go to Canada, probably I would never have stayed in North America. But since I went to Canada, and I liked it so much, so I tried to find a reason to stay in this country.



Figure 1 : Sachie arriving at Charlottetown Airport (Prince Edward Island, Summer 2016)

F: So Sachie, with your experience in Canada, you mentioned once to me that you were a tour guide in Canada; can you talk a little bit about that?

S: Yeah. During the summer, there's a lot of tourists from Japan to go to the Canadian Alps.

F: mm-hmm

S: So, someone recruited me to become a Canadian Alps tour guide, and the pay was so good.

F: Oh yes?

S: Yeah, and so I can't miss it. Although it was illegal.

F: (laughs) Under the table?

S: Yeah, and so I quickly learned how to become a tour guide. By the way, at that time, I was a tour guide for the Camping Trip. Which I never camped before. So, I instantly had to learn how to build a tent, and things. Of course, a tour, so a cook would come with us, so I don't need to cook or anything like that. Anyways, so, everybody laughed at me. You never go to camping, and now you're a camp tour guide? Yes.

F: Instant Canadian.

S: Yeah, yeah. But really, I learned a lot. Interestingly, I purchased all kinds of books about the Canadian Alps and, for example, also the ecosystem, like never ever give chocolate to squirrels, because they can't survive with chocolate.

F: Like with dogs; it's very toxic.

S: Not only toxic, but they don't have enough energy to survive during the winter. They really need *kurumi*, I mean the chestnut, or those mountain products, rather than the town products. But I gave one time, I didn't know that, so I gave an Almond Rocca to a squirrel, and I still regret that.

F: Oh no. So you don't know what happened to that squirrel? After?

S: Yeah, Maybe it died during the winter because of a lack of enough energy.

F: And a few years ago, we went to the Prince Edward Island.



Figure 2: Visiting Anne of Green Gables Visitor Centre (Prince Edward Island, Summer 2016)

S: Yeah yeah yeah. The PEI is one of the places I really wanted to go when I was in Canada, but I unfortunately I don't have a chance to go, and at that time, there is no bridge either.

F: yeah

S: But anyway, so when I found my sort of active life is limited, one of the things I mentioned to you that I really wanted to go to the PEI.

F: Mm-hmm



S: And that trip was almost near perfect for me that I really enjoyed, the four of us, so thank you very much for taking me over there.

F: It was a wonderful trip.

S: And so, also the literature

F: Lucy Maud Montgomery.

S: Mm-hmmm. It was not many Canadian authors I know, but that's one of the authors. So, like when we

are learning American literature in college, we totally confused American author and the British author and the Canadian author. To find American author is quite difficult. Most of the well-known names are British. Some of them are Canadians. So, it was an interesting experience. But anyway, I'm so glad I could see this real PEI.



Figure 4: Sachie and the Confederation Players Walking Tour & Historical Reenactment (Prince Edward Island, Summer 2016)

Unfortunately, Canada's market is so small, so I couldn't find any job, particularly for my capacity. At that time, when I look at the market in the United States, three positions were open, one is Illinois, one is Duke, and the other one is New York Public Library. Then at the time I learned that something like CJK system for Japanese language was developed in RLIN, so I thought without knowing this system I probably wouldn't survive the next few years. So, I was looking for an institution which would use that new system. So, I was invited to interview in Illinois. So, the first major question I was asking was that question and they said yes, we are planning to use that one from September. If you come to this position, you will definitely use it. So that's the decision I quickly made to go to Illinois. At that time, Duke's search was delayed. And New York Public sent me an invitation, but by regular mail, and it takes really snail mail, about ten days. But nobody realized it takes so long between Canada and the United States. So,

by the time I got the letter from New York Public Library, they thought I'm not interested and that's why I didn't respond.

F: Oh no.

S: And they interviewed someone else. And anyway, I was scared to go to New York. So, I said it's okay. So, I went to Illinois instead. So, that's the reason why I went to the United States for a job.

F: I see.

S: Because otherwise too dangerous because my parents really asked me to come back to home, if I don't get a job quickly.

F: Uh-huh. And uh, well I guess you kind of like already answered the question of how you got involved with Japanese studies librarianship because of the opportunity at University of Illinois.

S: Yeah, but actually I never intended to become a Japanese studies librarian. I thought I could be any librarian, like any other Canadians are. And I was really hoping so, but one day I was chatting with some friends and I realized I have almost no—same field in Japan I could really answer. Theater or something, theater design or something like that we were talking about. But in the United States I cannot tell anything about it. So I thought, oh, this doesn't work. So, I thought it's better to take Japanese librarianship. Besides the only reason I can take an American job is because I have ability to manage Japanese language.

F: Yeah, it's a very specific set of skills.

S: Yeah.

F: And very much wanted at that time.

S: Yeah, in a sense, yeah.

F: And so, after your very extensive career as a Japanese studies librarian, from Illinois you moved to ...?

S: Pittsburgh.

F: Pittsburgh?

S: Pittsburgh, to New York.

F: Yes, and in New York, you've worked for how many years at Columbia?

S: Sixteen years.

F: Sixteen years. And you've just recently retired in December.

S: In December, yes.

F: Well, over the course of all these years, we're kind of interested in knowing, what were the favorite parts of your job, what you enjoyed the most?

S: Hmmm. Collection development. Particularly talking with students and the researchers. To think about collection development in terms of their project and to find what they need. And, yeah, as for me the most rewarding work is collection development. Librarians, they go and come, come and go, but the collection remains in the premises, in the library, so it can serve not only this generation of student or faculty, but the next generation, or next, next generation, if you establish a good collection.

F: Yeah, and I'm pretty sure that the collection that you built, you left a mark on the Columbia University collection, and I think that it's actually quite apparent to see how a librarian works, and the type of collection that they've developed. People will certainly see that there was Sachie Noguchi's kind of legacy there.

S: No. There is no legacy. No such legacy. It was just whatever I thought is useful.

F: Yeah, for the needs of your faculty.

S: Yeah. For the needs of my users, I purchased. But it was a battle. Because when I moved to Columbia, Columbia doesn't have very much budget, so I don't have enough budget to buy what I need to serve our community. Columbia is a large Japanese researcher community and history and all this, humanities and social sciences. But the demand is high but my budget was so limited so I sort of struggled at the beginning. And anyway, I was well known in any university library, that if you have extra money, give it to Sachie, she can use it very quickly. So, I did the same thing in Columbia, but meanwhile, I established three endowments for the Library's collection. So, by the end of my career, my work was much, much easier than when I started. I had enough budget to buy what faculty..., not everything, but if I thought it was essential then we can buy it. But that wasn't the case when I was there, at the beginning. I still remember that one of the students wanted to have *kibyoshi*, real *kotenseki*. And *kibyoshi* around that time it was *san-juu-man-en* (300,000 yen= approximately 3000 USD), but to buy the *san-juu-man-en* book I have to think about where I could manage this amount. (F: What to let go...) But now *san-juu-man-en* is a piece of cake.

F: mm-hmm

S: But at that time, it wasn't like that. And also, recently, the market is fortunate, because for a while, one of my endowment was under water, it almost drowned! But it survived after the market turned around, but it was long, long under water. So it really depends on someone's luck I guess. Even the budget was the same amount, but it (depended on) how the market reacted and things.

F: So, part of it you actually mentioned, but were there any other challenges, other than lack of budget, that you felt throughout your career? Not only for collection development, but other things that you can think of.

S: One is distance between Japan and the United States. To get the material it takes *so* long, and in these days, I am willing to use EMS and those faster way of shipping, but that was unthinkable thing to use that sort of delivery system. It's always *funabin* (by boat). It takes at least one month and a half. And how frustrating it is, if you need now, but another two months it will not come. Then I really sympathize to the student. Or the researcher. So, distance is one of the issues. And also the United States is a large country. So even from New York to say UC Berkeley, it's a long, long distance, so if we request user interlibrary loan request, it takes some time. So that from time to time we cheated and called the colleague librarian and asked them to ship it a secret way.

F: (laughs). Using your connections.

S: Yeah, using your connections make a copy or something like that.

F: It's much easier to just get on the phone, and ask for a special favor.

S: Yeah, and even telephone, I wasn't so easily allowed to use at the beginning. But now it's internet,

F: So you can just scan.

S: Yeah, it's not an issue anymore. But distance is still an issue.

F: But with everything being so handy, I think that user's expectations also become more demanding. Because they want it in an even timelier manner.

S: Yeah, but that's understandable, so at certain point, I switched my mind, and order faculty and user requests, I asked the dealer to ship it by some faster way. And also, space. We always have a lack of space, so we constantly have to choose which one to go to the storage. Which is really shame because we have such a good collection, but a good part of that will to go off site. So, it's not browsable. Only In the catalog, it's browsable, but to go the shelf, and see somehow, what you're really interested in is one of the joys to be inside the library. But that is not possible, in a sense, so from that point of view, space is a big issue. I already mentioned budget.

F: We all suffer from that problem.

S: mm?

F: We all suffer and struggle with that problem.

S: But NCC backed with Japan, and we established the GIF (Global Interlibrary Loan Framework), G-I-F, so at certain point it became a little bit better than before.

F: Yeah, and also NCC had different programs, right, to give access to people? Not only GIF, but also expensive Multi-Volume sets programs, and other things.

S: Yeah, that's another venue, another direction, which NCC opened.

F: So, the next question deals with, what are some of the most memorable people you worked with? And what do you remember about them.

S: Well, according to Van Gessel, this is at the symposium of Prof. Keene's (Donald Keene) farewell symposium. And Van Gessel mentioned Prof. Keene and Prof. Tom Rimer (J. Thomas Rimer), both of them published in Japanese literature about 60%, so with two of the scholars whom I was serving was produced such a huge volume, or a huge percentage of publication in Japanese literature, which was a surprise. But both of them are completely two different scholars. Probably by the time when I see Prof. Keene, his most active part has been already over, probably. That's my guess. But he already knows how to do research probably, so he very seldom asked me to find something or he never asked anything extraordinary. For example, like some books he kept in his office, or something like that. That never happened to him. And Professor Rimer is also interested in many many things, and both of them commonly they ask something then that becomes their project, and a few months later, or one or two years later, that research is published. And Prof. Rimer is the same, but he is quite normal, I think, he's looking for this and that, this and that, so I'm not just only my own university, but I go to National libraries' stacks and search for books. Fortunately, I have a friend who let me get inside of the stacks, because otherwise it takes so much time. So in that way I find something for Prof. Rimer.

Interesting part is that was always used for his books. So that was the amazing part. I remember when I was in Japan for Professor Rimer, I was looking for something all the time. But Professor Keene is opposite. He never asked any unusual questions or any unusual favor for him. Of course, Prof. Rimer didn't say favor. But he's just asking to use the librarian as the most efficient way for his research, I guess.

F: And, Prof. Keene was living for many years in Japan, right? In the last part of his life.

S: Yeah.

F: But you still kept quite a constant contact with him.

S: Yeah, the reason is this: when he was, half of the year he spent in Japan, half of the year--from January to say May--he came to Columbia to teach one course. At that time, maybe Amy Heinrich, my former boss was dealing with him. I'm just a librarian and from time to time I served for him, but not consulting him or anything. But probably he knew I desperately needed some money or something like that. So anyway, he left for Japan 2011. At that time, it was just a normal faculty-Librarian's situation, I guess. But, when he left for Japan, one of his prescription medicines was not available in Japan so he secretly asked me to get that prescription medicine, every month, and send it to Japan. So I did that for about 3 years. So when I send the medicine, I just can't send medicine. Actually, it's illegal to send any medicine to send it to any country.

And at that time I didn't know, but just, if it's too small of a package, it may be easily lost, so that's why I always got Prof. Keene's favorite coffee from Zabar's,

F: And sent it along? With the medication?

S: Yeah, and also his favorite chocolate. And something else I sent. Every month, I was making a package and sending it to him, so probably he noticed that it's not just coming by itself, but I'm packing stuff and sending it to him. And also, although he left for Japan, he was still very much concerned about Columbia, and always his concern was how Columbia people have enough study material, and things. He is always giving us rescue. For example, Makino collection. We were struggling to find the money, but we couldn't find the money, but one day he came to Amy, and he said if he can offer 20% of the total price, if that helps you? And so of course, yes. Not me, it's Amy. So, in that way he was always helping the library. Although he was not inside the library, but he was always concerned about the library. And also he himself compiled all kinds of things to come to his office, to his home, like some set of journals, which is not a major stream journals, and also his publication and his friends' publication and things that come to his hand, and if he doesn't need it, then he sends it to the library.



Figure 5: From left to right: Professor Donald Keene, Sachie Noguchi, Seiki Keene (London, Jun 2017)

And also, he has an interesting habit. He likes to go to the old bookstores (*koshoten*), and we send the list of *Taiyo: Nihon no kokoro* (The Sun and the Japanese Spirit). And all the missing issues we reported to him, so whenever he goes to the bookstore, he asks for this issue or that issue, and if he finds, he sends it to us. So, one time I was chided, "Who asked such things of

Prof. Keene?” Not me, but he asked me to provide a list, and he said it’s much more fun to go to the bookstore with some item he has to find, or something like that.

F: So, you had a very high profile collection development assistant.

S: (laughs). Yeah yeah yeah, one of the highest. But anyway, so it was one limited item, but still, he helped us. And whenever I went to Tokyo, I went to visit him to say thank you for the constantly given assistance to us. So that probably I became closer to him, more than when he was at Columbia.

F: Oh, that’s wonderful. Such an interesting story. So the next question deals with some of the events in your career that stayed most vividly with you. Some of the things you felt were the highlight of your career or things that you remember very vividly.

S: Hmm, there are many, but maybe *Tenri kotenseki* workshop.



Figure 6 Figure 7: Tenri Kotenseki Workshop Phase 1 (Tenri Toshokan, Jun 2007)

(F: Yeah) The reason is because it is almost the first time for joint project with European, EAJRS (European Association of Japanese Resource Specialists). And, well first of all, I and Izumi Tytler-san, who just last year retired from Oxford. She was a Japanese Studies librarian and at the same time like director of the Nissan Institute for Japanese Studies, or something. And so, we graduated from the same college, so one time, as soon as I got a job at the University of Illinois. This professor was visiting Illinois and said to me, “If you go to England, there is

Tytler-san, who is also Keio graduate, see her.” So, next time I went to England, I see her, and since then we became good, in a sense, partners, and did a lot of things together. Not just only library job, but we went to opera – as I met [with you] first time in Toronto – and things so those two things are combined in a sense because when Tenri workshop came, and I cannot write a proposal to the Japan Foundation because NCC said that’s too...Japan Foundation. So, I asked her to write a proposal, but I said I will work with you. So, this is the summer we went to Edinburgh for the Ring Cycle so that when there is an opera, we went to the opera but those few days, there is no opera, in the hotel, we worked on the proposal. So, like that, it was combined in that way, we most efficiently worked together. Because otherwise distance is still distance and not easy to conquer.



Figure 8: From left to right: Koyama Noboru, Teruko Sekiguchi, Izumi Tytler, Sachie Noguchi, Hamish Todd, Fujiko Kobayashi, Akira Hirano (British Library, Jun 2017)

And fortunately, in that way, it started, and Tenri was not North American initiative. It is a certain European initiative. They talked with Professor Nakayama, when he visited Europe, and asked him to do this workshop. And, fortunately, or unfortunately, I went to EAJRS’s annual meeting every year since it started because at that time I was at Illinois, and I had faculty status and if you don’t do research, you will be perished, and when you do research, you have to presentation and things so Europe was a good place for that. So, I went to EAJRS conference and also presented my paper and things. So almost every year we met each other. And at that time, I was CJK Chair, and I need to plan for the next year’s CJK session and EAJRS, Japanese Institution and scholars, they came to Europe, not necessarily to North America. So, I could sort

of sense what's going on in Japan, and I could use that knowledge for next year's my plan, so it was very beneficial for me to go to the European meeting.



Figure 9: Presenting Noboru Koyama with a gift from the North American colleagues on the occasion of his retirement (EAJRS in Leiden, Sep 2015)

And then I asked Tytler-san what was going on in Europe and in Japan, and she said, well, we talked with Professor Yamanaka. And we said, “Can we join them?” And she said, “Well, we’ll talk about it.” So, at that time, I’m not sure if Yamanaka Sensei was at that meeting or not, but anyhow, Tenri accepted participation from the United States. And so, we made a joint committee: Tytler-san, Hamish, myself and Vande Walle Sensei, maybe one more someone. So, we worked, and we asked NCC to be a burser, in terms of money to distribute, so from that point of view, North America really contributed, but that establish was done by European colleagues. And at that time, among 30, about 20 were Europeans, I don’t remember exactly how many went but from the United States, only 6 of us, and from Europe probably double of that number, and so this was the first time that European librarians and Japanese librarians worked together. That was a big sort of basement to build the bridge for the next few years, and it was not only one year but it was three years step system *koshiki* or something like that, step system. So one year it was this system and the next year will be a little bit more. Next year will be a little bit more, so once

we have only one week in Tenri, but those 10 days, one week, we are meeting together and then sleeping in the same building so we certainly became very close.



Figure 10: Tenri Kotenseki Workshop Phase 1 group photo (Nara, Jun 2008)

And also, as an excursion, we went to some important Nara area institutions. It was really a very valuable opportunity for all of us to go there. And not just cataloging things but also cultural things. And one of the most valuable experiences for me was manuscripts because we don't have manuscripts, so many of them, so very seldom catalog them, but Tenri has tons of them so we were asked to catalog some of the manuscripts. Of course, I believed whatever was written was author, title, and those things, so I cataloged as usual. Then I was told, "Is this really the author or not? Because manuscripts are sometimes it is copied." And so, this person's *hisseki* (penmanship) and the name of the real person's *hisseki* are two different things, and Tenri is big enough to compare one author, at that time, they had, my guess is five manuscripts they have, so we can compare the cataloged piece and the well-established real piece and see the differences. That was a big boon to me because I never think of it or even imagined it but since then I was very, very careful whether this was done by this one or whether this was the one who copied it. That was a very big experience and otherwise, probably I never would have realized and probably no chance in America to do such things, a well-known person's *kotenseki* itself and

compare five such different books, and find it is same or not the same. So that was quite an experience and in that sense that is one of the most memorable experience for me, Tenri, and after three years, we became very, very close and not just only that, it was expanded to some of the other exchanges. For example, Hamish almost every year comes to almost every meeting also Natalie, and (Fabiano: and also Antony) and Antony, as well, so almost every year come North America, gradually, not just only me, but many of us are going. I invited you to come. You asked me if you should come and I said, “definitely yes” and since then you have been going every year, I guess.



Figure 11: Sachie Noguchi and Antony Boussemart studying hard in Tenri (Tenri, Jun 2009)



Figure 12: From left to right (clockwise): Sachie Noguchi, Setsuko Noguchi, Fabiano Rocha, Antony Boussemart, Hamish Todd, Yasuyo Ohtsuka (EAJRS in Leuven, Sep 2014)

F: Yeah, thanks to you, I started going to EAJRS in 2008, I think, and you said, you should really come because it is going to be in Portugal and you would have both, Japan and Portugal. And ever since then I have been very much enjoying going to EAJRS every year.

S: It expands your horizon

F: It does and it's also different from the structure of the CJM or the CEAL. They have much more time to explore Japanese topics alone, and much more opportunity to do networking, I think, because they have more days than in one annual conference. (Noguchi: yeah, two different structure of the conferences) And it is something to look forward to every year to see your friends and learn so thank you.

F: The Japanese Text Initiative, which is an example of one of the forefront digital humanities projects, so can you talk a little more about that.

S: At that time, there is no such word as digital humanities. We called it electronic text. And actually, it was not initiated by me, I was invited by the University of Virginia's then assistant

University librarian, Kendon Stubbs. He was awakened to Japanese culture when he was 16 years old, and since then he is a strong believer of Japanese culture and then the University of Virginia has one of the largest collections of electronic texts. David Seaman was at that time the director of the Electronic Text Center. They can do very interesting things which researchers never think about it before this technology came. And so, so Kendon thought, if they can do some other languages, why not Japanese? But there is a certain sort of a way to deal with that text, so it has to be used, authentic text before input. So, you will input all these characters but it has to be based on a certain text. So, like the first item we did, just slipped my mind, but we got that book from the University of Berkeley because Pittsburgh doesn't have it.

So anyway, he invited me to join this initiative because Virginia, there is no Japanese studies librarian. So definitely I will be a little bit help, so I decided to join because it was a new area, and I have no idea what was going on but anyway, so I have started. And on my side, I hired a student to input. Inputting text is not so difficult, you have to be careful, but it is not so tricky, but one of the things which really bothered me was tagging. And at that time, we used TEI, and one time I was in Virginia during the summer. Inside of the hot library, I was tagging and I became sort of almost losing my consciousness, so then I realized that I'm really tired and have coffee and then came back and worked. But eventually the Japanese Text initiative became my dissertation topics because the other topics I was thinking was ruined by the internet. So, I used this Japanese Text Initiative as my research topic, so then you have to start from the really base to the application. So, I did all these things and fortunately, Pittsburgh has next door Carnegie Mellon. Carnegie Mellon has anything to do with computer so the most of these books Pittsburgh doesn't have but Carnegie Mellon has some of these books, so I used all these books in the library and studied and I did a survey.

But anyway, by the time I finished, how many, not many, even now not so many are there, but it became very, very popular among certain circle of people, particularly Noguchi Sensei, who is a *keizai gakusha* (Economist)-- not related to me. He was so applauded because anybody can access and use it. So he recommended the Japanese Text Initiative to the Kyoto-sho and the University of Virginia got the prize and I'm also pleased too. Eventually, they also hired Iwabuchi-san. Iwabuchi-san was at that time student at the University of Virginia. So she helped to do their work. So what I did and what she did were two different things but both of us were involved in this Japanese Text Initiative. Eventually much, much later, there was such a word as digital humanities and "wait a minute, this is what I have done in the past!" then Nagasaki-san came and I asked, "Is anyone using TEI these days." He said, "It's a major tagging system," or something like that. I was really surprised, I thought no one was using TEI anymore so it's a sort of a dead language or something like that. But now it is tagging so its TEI is major because it can be used in various way, sort of a rare system, so certain things can be tagged in. And uh, but anyway, it was my experience, but I'm not sure how much I understood at that time. So now like when everybody is talking about digital humanities, to me it is the past now. It's done.

F: Yeah, like you say, the term has become so popular and everybody thinks it is so recent, but when you really think about it, it was happening so much more, before people even thought about it.

S: Yeah, yep, I can't remember the name of the author but there is a book written by a British lady, she is from Cambridge, I guess. That was the initiation of the Japanese text initiative. Actually, the first initiation was Bussa, a Franciscan monk. He did Index Domesticus, it's a sort of a bible thing and he used an IBM big frame computer. And he input everything in that frame so that was the first initiative of electronic text. That's what I read in the book. Since then no one is using big frame computer anymore, but the spirit is still the same. What they are trying to do is still the same. It depends on how you use your text, but you can do a lot of interesting things if you properly tagged so in a sense I was very lucky, although at that time I didn't know what I was doing. But I had a test of digital humanities already (F: At a very early stage.) Yeah, at a very early stage, but when I started, it is already personal computer is available. So much easier than the European monk who started with the big frame computer. It is interesting, always monk started something new, like wine is the same, and they have time and the energy. But anyways, so that's my experience, and we started from classical Japanese literature and by the time... then there are a lot of requests for modern literature. So, we got texts from Aozora bunko and that tagging was done by Iwabuchi-san using HTML rather than TEI. I don't know why they changed but probably TEI is more stratified and more difficult to tag, I guess. But eventually Kendon retired, and money ran out so Japanese text is not increased anyway. And even when I came to Columbia, Columbia tried to help to hire students and do some more text but somehow it was not materialized, unfortunately. One of Columbia's graduates is teaching at Virginia. He comes a little bit earlier then he could use this offer, but at that time, no one was really interested in Virginia. So, I also gave up.

F: It's interesting, right? Sometimes, if projects like that have a strong base, they might be revived somewhere else.

S: Yeah, yeah, yeah, but not foreseeable future, I guess. Why Virginia is because one of my colleagues at Engineering Library, moved from Pittsburgh to the University of Virginia, she happened to know Kendon, I guess, of course she's his superior, and so she mentioned the Japanese Studies librarian at Pittsburgh so that's why Kendon knew I was there and we started the project. But in a sense, this was the initiative of Kendon, rather than Japanese. He is American and he was interested in Japanese culture and so he started. Without that kind of help, it would never fly and his position made it possible. And fortunately, we got the prize from Japan and things so it wasn't completely sort of a flop. And at certain point it was really popular. There's no other electronic text available.

F: Mm hmm, and probably inspired other projects that were similar.

S: Yeah probably, and of course, like Kokubunken can hire a lot of students and graduate students and do a much, much larger scale initiative. But we are really a cottage industry so we did a very small scale, but I really enjoyed it.

F: It was a great contribution

S: Yeah, this is one of the things that librarians should think about. You can do a major job, your primary responsibility, but at the same time do some research, something challenging project on top of your daily routine. That makes you not get bored. To me, like librarian job, if you only do the librarian's job as your primary responsibility, three years is the maximum. After that you will be a little bit tired and neglect your honed interest. But if you do research, you will find another niche here and niche there and trying to explore some more, so in that way, you can hone your service to be a good librarian, I guess.

F: I agree. Thank you. So, the next question is, if you could change something about your career is there anything that you would?

S: That's a difficult question. Maybe I started as a research institution librarian and didn't focus at the beginning on being an academic librarian and, even librarianship, I didn't even know what things are available, and rather than think about my real future, I was thinking to get a job, a first job. So, from that point of view, if I were much more visionary and know your ability and your future expectation then I could choose different way of librarianship, I guess. I chose to go to library school, even Keio, but I don't have clear vision just because library school is good for ladies. That is what Asahi Shinbun said because it is always a good environment. That is part of the reason I went to library school and also library school at Keio is a little bit different from other departments. Inside the faculty of letters or the sociology or literature departments, library school was different. And also, we have a minor because it is an undergraduate subject, so instead of having a subject, undergraduate, we have to do both when you are in Keio, and so it was an interesting experience and at that time, even Keio graduate, 50 of us or so graduated from Keio, only 2 or 3 got a job as a female student so I wasn't sure whether I could get any job or not, so when I got a job I was so happy.

F: But then you mentioned that you did your masters in sociology and then you went back into library studies degree for your PhD.

S: After I graduated from Keio, I worked eleven years at a research institution So I have enough career in a sense. And although research institution and college institution, college and university environment are two different things, but still a certain part of my experience can be used in an academic library setting. Anyway, it was a research institution so all I am dealing with are the researchers.

F: Has the field of Japanese studies librarianship changed over your career, and if so, how would you say?

S: It is a difficult question. I think it has certainly changed. Day to day, life experience. For example, like the focus of the subject is completely different. For example, literature, in the old days only pure literature *junbungaku* was studied and *taishu shosetsu* (popular novels) or something like that would never have been studied, but the horizon was expanding, expanding, and expanding and finally comes to manga. Probably at that time, when I started as an academic librarian, no one would think about manga as a research sources so from that point of view the horizon is expanding, that is one thing. But there is something beyond that, but I can't really express it in a complete word. That is my struggling right now. Of course, technology changed a lot. Because of technology or the convenience, like I felt like we are losing something, and I haven't seen so much yet what we are losing, but somehow attitudes towards research are changing. Attitudes toward using the library material or expectations of the library material is different. So, like there is a shift, but in what way we are shifting, I'm not 100 percent sure.

F: Yeah, I can see that. I think the way that probably students interact with materials is quite different. In an online environment and on the screen, there is probably a tendency to skim through things, as opposed to actually doing deep reading. So that may be one of the changes that you probably have observed.

S: It is possible.

F: So, we were just discussing about, what would you tell librarians and Japan scholars who are just starting out, your message for the next generation.

S: I felt probably anytime is a difficult but today's librarianship is quite fuzzy. Probably their life is much more difficult than ours. But to have a good guidance to be a librarian is one thing. And also, inside of your own institution, you need to find someone who can help you. But, if you know what is your question, it is easy to ask but today's librarianship is fuzzy, so fuzzy, and sometimes you don't necessarily know and then it is not so easy to find the guidance of answers, but anyway, my mission when I became NCC chair was I felt I had to become *workshop no obasan* (workshop lady). I actually called myself *workshop no obasan* because I organized so many workshops. The first workshop I did for NCC was the Junior Japanese Studies Librarian. At that time, I told them, at my generation we do this workshop so at your generation, you have to do the next stage workshop so that the next generation, we have no shortage of Japanese studies librarians. And also, cooperation is very important. Particularly, in the CJK environment, we are always competing with Chinese and Korean Librarians, for better or for good. So, we have to think about our service, as well as our own working place. There is always collaboration and at the same time competition. But anyway, if you are not fighting yourself it is easier so that's why I felt that to make a network is very important. So now close collaboration is expanding to the international, thanks to EAJRS, but still a lot of things are unknown and **no one** can really teach you how to do this and that, but at least we should teach next generation what we already know and the newer generation may not know. So, don't be shaken because of the fuzzy

environment, new librarians, so you should put yourself on solid ground and don't lose yourself in the ocean of information and technology.

F: Well thanks to you, you started the Professional Development Committee at NCC (S: That's right. That's right.) so many workshops were derived from that

S: And not just only Tenri, we were also talking about the *kusushiji workshop*. The first time I went to the *kusushiji* workshop, which was held at Paris *Bunka Kaikan*, and I learned how they did it. So, sort of I mimicked the same thing in North America, but one thing I was told was that Kokubunken will provide *sensei* and materials maybe something, but the accommodation and things we have to manage, locally manage. So certainly, we need local institutions' support, but if I didn't have the European model, I never can do myself, so from that point of view, I am really thankful to them.



Figure 13: Sachie Noguchi giving introductory remarks to the participants of the Kuzushiji Workshop (Columbia University, May 2014)

F: And I think that in North America, I can speak on behalf of many people that, thanks to your leadership, and your creativity, and your energy and enthusiasm, that we were able to benefit from so many things that you initiated and provided to us; so my sincere gratitude.

S: Oh, but that's really my old past, so I already forgot, but I am glad if I was able to be of help to anyone.

F: We won't forget. (S: Thank you.) I think with that we will conclude. We thank you very much for sharing your experiences with us

S: Thank you for bearing with my disorganized brain.

F: Yes, and we look forward to keeping in touch with you.

S: Indeed.

F: Thank you.

S: Thank you.



Figure 14: From front to back (clockwise): Sachie Noguchi, Kris Troost, Regan Murphy Kao, ??, Sarah Elman Jim Cheng, Brian Vivier,, Katherine Matsuura, Haruko Nakamura, Setsuko Noguchi, Kuniko McVey (Durham, NC, Dec 2017)