

Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, the University of Tokyo
Program for Evolving Humanities and Sociology
Research Visit Report

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Personal Information

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- Major: Japanese History
- Category: 2011, Summer, Individual, PD

Research Theme

Historical Studies on Japanese Studies in the United States: Focusing on the period before World War II

Visit

- Department of History, University of Hawai'i, at Mānoa, Honolulu, Hawai'i, the United States of America
- Advisor: Prof. William Wayne Farris
- January 15, 2012–March 21, 2012 (67 days)

Research Report

(1) Research Plan

By historiographically examining Kan'ichi Asakawa's (1873–1948) comparative feudalism theory, I plan to study the status of Japanese historical studies in the English-speaking world.

The objective of this research visit was to investigate how Japanese Studies is taught and conducted in the United States and to examine academic exchanges between the two countries before World War II. This research aims to clarify the impact of Asakawa's works on both Japanese Studies (Japanology) and Japan-United States relations.

(2) Methodology and Results

The research was conducted as follows.

First, on the advice of Prof. Farris, I efficiently collected English books and papers on Japanese history that are not easily available in Japan. This methodical bibliographical research is helpful when studying the kind of research

that was conducted in the United States after Asakawa's time.

Second, I expanded my study to include the impact that Asakawa's comparative feudalism theory had on the international perception of Japanese legal history. At the law school (William S. Richardson School of Law) library, I examined the collection of reference materials to determine the extent of historical interest in the study of Japanese law.

Third, I conducted research on Japanology in Hawai'i, and studied the relationship between Hawai'i and Ryukyu, the two "peripheries" of the United States and Japan, which produced an unexpected result. I interviewed Ms. Bazzell, the Japan Specialist Librarian at Hamilton library, on the status of the collection of Japanese books at the University of Hawai'i. At the library, I examined the Hawley Collection, which was created by the English journalist Frank Hawley (1906–1961). It consists of 5,000 items, mostly Ryukyu source materials (over 2,000 copies/936 items), which is one of the best collections of Japanese manuscripts overseas. I also examined materials on Shunzo Sakamaki (1906–1973), a professor and pioneer researcher of Japanese and Ryukyu history.

Last, I attempted to determine the status of Japanology in the international academic world. At the University of Hawai'i, I interviewed Prof. Huey, the director of the Center for Japanese Studies, which was established in 1920 by Tasuku Harada (1863–1940). Prof. Steinhoff, Department of Sociology, told me about the Japan Foundation project to revise a Directory of Japan specialists and Japanese Studies institutions in the United States and Canada.

I thus studied the development of Japanology in the United States more broadly than I had originally planned to, and acquired basic information on the status of Japanese Studies that clearly reveals Asakawa's influence.

(3) Future Research

It is necessary to arrange the data and material that I have collected during my visit. I am planning to include this data in my essay on modern historiography, which I am currently writing.

Next, to examine modern historiography from an international standpoint, I will review studies on Japanese history conducted outside Japan. Based on my review, I will consider the current state of academic exchange, comparing the national history of Japan with Japanese history of the world.