

The Toyo Bunko & the Morrison Collection



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Introduction: The Toyo Bunko Morrison Collection & the “China Problem”

Just over 100 years have passed since the Asiatic Library that had been housed in Wangfujing, Beijing, was transferred to Tokyo in 1917, through the auspices of Baron Hisaya Iwasaki (third president of the Mitsubishi Corporation). With the Morrison Collection, comprising 23,000 books, forming its core, the Toyo Bunko (or “Oriental Library”) was established in 1924; currently Minoru Makiyama, special consultant for the Mitsubishi Corporation and a relative of the Iwasaki family, is serving as chair of the board. The Toyo Bunko is Japan’s only private-sector, comprehensive Asia Research Facility, and is comparable to any of the West’s representative research libraries, being renowned both within Japan and domestically. The collection exceeds one million books, including 300,000 works in Western languages and 400,000 in Chinese, with the remainder covered by works in other languages of the Asian region. In 2011 a new building incorporating a book museum was completed, and through public exhibitions of the collection, the library has received a great deal of attention.

Looking back 100 years ago, at the beginning of the 20th century,

G. E. Morrison faced the so-called “China Problem”. Amidst an environment where there was major discussion domestically and internationally in regard to issues related to China, he involved himself in China, Japan and other parts of Asia. In particular, Morrison had the objective of amassing intellectual studies on Asia in the Asian region, and collected materials and works in Western languages to build up the Asiatic Library over a period of 20 years.

Today, at the start of the 21st century, a new “China Problem” has made a dramatic appearance. It can be said that the Toyo Bunko, which was developed by Morrison as a result of discussions on the “China Problem” in the last century, is a perfect repository of materials for understanding the genesis and future of today’s “China Problem”. In order to reflect on the spirit of Morrison’s era and the environment of the times, I would like to consider here the characteristics of the Toyo Bunko, centered on the Morrison Collection.

G. E. Morrison: His Career & Personality

George Ernest Morrison was born in Geelong, Australia, in 1862, and served as the China correspondent for *The Times* of London. At the time of the Occupation by the armed forces of eight countries after the Boxer Rebellion (1900), he was a commissioned officer in the British army, took part in actual battles, and was wounded. In the Russo-Japanese War, he transmitted information from the Japanese military, and was present at many different negotiation situations. Morrison travelled widely throughout China, such as to Hubei, Szechuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan. During his stays in Thailand and Cambodia, he travelled from Kunming in Yunnan to the Shan plateau. In 1912, when the Republic of China was established as a result of the Xinhai Revolution, Morrison became a political advisor to Yuan Shikai, first president of the republic, and to Li Yuanhong (later president), and played a role in China’s negotiations for loans from Europe. At the Paris Peace Conference after World War I, he took part as an advisor for the Chinese delegation. Morrison died in Sidmouth, England, in 1920 at the age of 58. He was known as “Chinese Morrison” and was a leader of Britain’s China policies.

Eiko Woodhouse, who compiled archives of Morrison’s letters and other documents, focusing on his personality and work, wrote in 1988 in her *Nichiro Sensou o Enshutsu Shita Otoko: Morrison* (“Morrison: The Man Who Choreographed the Russo-Japanese War”) as follows: “Morrison was a typical British imperialist. British

Photo 1: The Toyo Bunko



The Toyo Bunko building

people of the time felt pride and faith in their belief that the British Empire controlled the seven seas, and never saw the sun go down, and it was truly Britain, proud of its *Pax Britannica*, that was the leader of the development of the world's civilization, and also bore responsibility for it. The British felt pride in the unshakeable position of the British Empire." Certainly, Morrison played an essential role in the global economy and was an important ingredient of the British Empire. As a special correspondent for *The Times*, "Chinese Morrison" was intimately involved in diplomacy, from southeast Asia to east and central Asia; indeed, in his diplomatic activity, his style of argument constantly stressed the strategic viewpoint of Britain's global management, such as the interests of the British Empire, or in what form to build up the influence of Britain on various regions of the world, or how to resist Russia in the course of doing so, or how to relate to Japan. All his activities seemed to be based on this mindset. The fact that Morrison carried out his activities from 1902 to 1918, at the same time as the Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1902-1923), and also at the same period that China transformed itself from Qing rule to a republic, is also remarkable.

The Composition & Contents of the Morrison Collection

Morrison's Asiatic Library was the result of his avid collecting of materials. This tenacity led him to stipulate four conditions when Baron Iwasaki acquired the collection: along with maintaining and continuing the Asiatic Library, he requested that his existing subscriptions to over 100 kinds of periodical publications would continue and their materials be collected, and the Toyo Bunko has followed this stipulation even up until the present day.

The Morrison Collection, as well as the main collection of written works in the Toyo Bunko, papers and so on, and the Morrison Pamphlets, also includes Morrison's archive diaries, letters and other written materials, such as notebooks, name cards, and various items that he used in everyday life, which are stored in the New South Wales State Library in Sydney, Australia (Mitchell Library).

a. Types of publications (history, travel records, Christianity-related, diplomacy)

All the materials in European languages in the Morrison Collection have a kangaroo bookplate attached, and through the kangaroo, eucalyptus, lakes and water bird symbols, it is obvious that Morrison was an Australian.

The classical European works that form the core of the Morrison Collection include many publications related to travel records such

Photo 2: The Toyo Bunko



The Morrison Collection (exhibition room)

as "Toyo Henrekiki" (*Peregrinação*, 1614) by the Portuguese explorer Fernão Mendes Pinto, which records the spread of global awareness of Asia in 16th century Europe and later; and "Toho Kenbunroku" (*The Travels of Marco Polo*, 1299), as well as collections of maps of value to the world, such as all nine volumes of Joan Blaeu's large-size *Grooten Atlas*, 1664-1665, and all 11 volumes of Johannes Janssonius's *Atlas Novus*, 1658.

At the same time, the collection also includes regular publications that Morrison personally collected, and other works; these include valuable materials of the times related to Southeast Asia, East Asia, China and Japan, as seen in the modern history of the period. Among them, in Morrison's lifetime when attention was being paid to Russia's appearance on the international stage, including the increasing seriousness of Russia's policy of pushing steadily southward, the fact that, of the materials collected by Morrison, works written in Russian comprise the third-largest language grouping, after those written in English or French, is surely a reflection of the period during which Morrison lived.

b. Periodicals (Chinese Maritime Customs materials, consular reports, trade reports)

The collection of periodicals was something stressed by Morrison himself in the Asiatic Library, and is extremely well represented. Even today, over 100 years since Morrison's era, the Toyo Bunko continues to maintain and collect these periodicals, and they are a valuable part of its inventory. For example, Morrison collected virtually almost all of the periodicals published related to China in English up to 1917; in regard to the Chinese Maritime Customs



Photo 3: The Toyo Bunko

G.E. Morrison and the Asiatic Library at Peking in August 1917
Front row (from left): Masunosuke Odagiri (1868-1934),
diplomat, banker and first auditor of the Toyo Bunko; G.E.
Morrison (1862-1920); Mikinosuke Ishida (1891-1974), East
Asian historian and director of the Morrison Collection until 1934.

materials, these include not only trade statistics, but also medical surveys and special reports on tea, opium and raw silk, and they comprise systemic and massive materials on the society, politics, economics and culture of China as a whole.

Moreover, although in present times documents related to Great Britain's parliamentary reports can be easily read in online formats, the fact that materials related to China are extremely prolific in this collection reminds us of Morrison's sense of mission as a China correspondent. In spite of differences in scale, the Toyo Bunko collection of European periodicals, in addition to the Morrison Collection and the Iwasaki Collection's European-language section, can be considered comparable to the libraries and material collections of the West's major universities and research institutes.

c. Pamphlets, papers, etc. (The Morrison Pamphlets)

The Morrison Pamphlets are items that Morrison assiduously pursued on the numerous topics that interested him, and comprise papers published in magazines – he would cut out only the items that interested him from these magazines, add cover pages to them, and file them together, by specific region. We can clearly understand how extremely practically the papers were put to use. Both the

magazines that he continuously collected, and specialised papers, are included. In particular, apart from the periodicals, there are more than 6,000 items that are here classified as pamphlets.

Perusing the pamphlets, we find among them letters between Morrison and publishers requesting remittances, receipts, and so on, and can see that Morrison himself carried out the work of clipping out papers in which he was interested and compiling them together in files on particular regions. In a sense, they can be considered compilations of papers that Morrison himself edited. The contents are extremely broad-ranging, and include issues covering almost all areas of politics, diplomacy, economics, history, and culture that were occurring in the world during Morrison's day. Accordingly, we have the sense that these pamphlets, rather than being compiled based on investigation into some specific topic, reveal the character of Morrison himself, with his presence seeping out in the way that his era is portrayed. Although European languages form the core, the pamphlet collection includes newspapers and magazines in Chinese, and we can keenly sense that Morrison had put considerable thought into the collection, as shown by the combinations of a wide range of materials on which we placed a special emphasis.

d. Other items (copperplate prints, maps, sketches)

In addition to written materials, there are also copperplate prints, such as those of the Battle of Canton during the first Opium War (1839-1842) by the British painter Edward Duncan, who had sketched details of the British warship *Nemesis* bombarding a Qing junk. Moreover, the several hundred sketches of Macao by the British painter George Chinnery (1774-1852) are valuable materials for future research into art history.

As can be seen in Morrison's Asiatic Library, the central focus of the Toyo Bunko is materials from the Asian region, especially China. However, included in the Hisaya Iwasaki Collection are many materials related to Japan, in particular Japanese-language materials from the medieval period, works in classical Japanese such as *The Tale of Genji*, and *ukiyo-e*. The materials related to modern history that were gathered by the China research team include many of Japan's survey and research materials on Asia. There are also abundant materials regarding research on China and Asia, and research exchanges between Japan and Asia, and Japan and the West, among the Japanese-language materials. Furthermore, Morrison's second son, Alastair Morrison, worked for the government of Sarawak, and his collection is also housed in the Toyo Bunko.

J.S.

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