

## NAGOYA: ITS CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SPECIALIST LIBRARIES

Penny Herbert  
Independent Scholar based in Perth, Western Australia

I spent a period of three and a half years, from 1991 to 1995, teaching on a campus near Nagoya, in central Japan, and living in a pleasant suburb on the eastern edge of that city. My previous periods of residence in Japan had been in Kyoto, Tokyo and Osaka, and I was not expecting life in Nagoya to provide the same kind of cultural stimulus; but in fact I was in for an agreeable surprise. My home was a stone's throw from a rather run-down old temple, which was spruced up the last year of my stay. A magnificent stone stele was erected commemorating the thousandth anniversary of the temple's foundation. With other foreign teaching staff, twice running I enjoyed turning out on chilly New Year's Eve nights, well fortified from a "bring a dish and BYO" party, to join local residents in ringing the bells at this and another old local temple.

Nagoya is usually regarded as a useful station along the Bullet Train (Shinkansen) line for travelling north to the mountain country or south to Ise, but otherwise a modern industrial city, a "cultural desert" with little to recommend it. It lacks the immediate cultural appeal of Kyoto or the excitement of Tokyo or Osaka, but nevertheless it does have some cultural treasures. Historically, the Nagoya area was the home of the great rival mediæval warlords, Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu, and had great strategic significance in the wars of the late sixteenth century. The construction of Nagoya Castle, the present-day city's most prominent tourist attraction, was the trigger for the city's growth. The castle was built at the command of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first Tokugawa shogun, at the very beginning of the Edo period, in the early seventeenth century, and was given to his ninth son, Tokugawa Yoshinao (1600-1650), when he was made lord of the fief of Owari, the area surrounding modern Nagoya. Owari was an important strategic base for the Tokugawas, so it was granted to one of the *sanke*, or three major branches, of the Tokugawa clan. Because of its favourable position for communications, standing on the Tokaido route between the shogun's capital of Edo (Tokyo) and the imperial capital of Kyoto, the city which grew up around the fortress also became a prosperous economic centre, growing rapidly to achieve its present status of fourth largest city in Japan.

Nagoya Castle, historical fortress of the Owari-Tokugawa clan, was destroyed, along with most of the surrounding city, in World War II, so the present structure is one of those sterile ferro-concrete reconstructions which give only a general impression of an old castle from the outside and completely disappoint the purist from the inside. To the north of Nagoya is a little gem, the only privately-owned castle in Japan, which still belongs to the descendants of the senior vassals of the Owari clan, the Naruse family.

This is Inuyama ("Dog Mountain") Castle, a small wooden keep on massive stone foundations built in 1601, which is designated a National Treasure.

Inuyama Castle is well worth a visit for its historical interest, but Nagoya Castle has closer ties with librarians and bibliophiles. After his death, Tokugawa Ieyasu bequeathed one third of his library, the Suruga Bunko, to each of the senior branches of the Tokugawa clan. Three thousand volumes thus came to be deposited in Nagoya Castle, where they soon grew, through the efforts of the Owari-Tokugawa lords, to 19,000 and, by the end of the Edo period, to over 50,000. In 1912, the then head of the family, Tokugawa Yoshichika, collected these books together as the Hosa Bunko and moved them to his principal residence in Tokyo. In the late twenties, the public was granted access to this collection.

"Hosa" is an old name for Nagoya and refers to another site of great historical and cultural significance in the city, the Atsuta Shrine, otherwise known as "Horai Island". "Horai" is the Chinese Penglai, the Daoist "Immortal Isle" in the Eastern Sea, which is sometimes whimsically identified with Japan. Atsuta Shrine, one the principal Shinto shrines of Japan, is custodian of the sacred sword, part of the imperial regalia.

In keeping with its name and historical links, the Hosa Bunko was returned to Nagoya in 1950 and was opened to the public in 1951, housed in a library in the grounds of a retreat of the Owari-Tokugawa family in Ozone, to the northeast of the city centre. Gradually, other collections were added to the old daimyo library. The largest of these is the Ozaki Kyoya Collection of approximately 30,000 items, presented in the Hosa Bunko in 1972. Ozaki was a specialist in Japanese literature and his collection, rich in Edo literary works and the ukiyo-e prints, has given the Hosa Library much of its special character.

The Hosa Library is also strong in early cartography and "Dutch learning" (early books on Western science, technology, medicine and the like) from the Edo period. The core Suruga Library contains the oldest extant handwritten version of the Heian novel, the *Genji Monogatari* (Tale of Genji), dating from the thirteenth century, and a number of other books designated important Cultural Properties.

Of particular interest to me are the Chinese rare books in the Hosa Library. It was because of their existence that I was shown over the library by my friend, Professor Tonami Mamoru of Kyoto University, a scholar of Tang dynasty history who occasionally goes from library-rich Kyoto to research there. The Chinese volume of the rare books catalogue of Hosa Library contains thirty-seven titles, of which eleven are in manuscript and the rest in printed form. They cover Confucian classics, literature, both mainstream and popular, and even medicine. The handwritten copies were produced in Japan in the Muromachi period.

Since the late seventies, the Hosa Bunko has been attached to the city's museum department. It is part of the same complex as the Tokugawa Art Museum, which is famous as the home of one half of the extant portions from the illustrated handscroll of the Genji Monogatari painted by Fujiwara no Tokayoshi between 1120 and 1130 (the other half is in the Goto Art Museum in Tokyo). They are outstanding examples of court style *emaki-mono*, handscrolls illustrating a story. The precious examples are exhibited, a few at a time and for a short period only, every five years, and I was lucky enough to see some of the original during my stay in Nagoya. Another of my favourite treasures of this museum is their huge and impressive collection of Girls' Festival *hina* dolls, built up by the female members of the Owari-Tokugawa clan.

The Hosa Bunka and Tokugawa Art Museum represent the traditional secular contribution to Nagoya culture and book collecting, but the city's Buddhist temples were repositories of valuable books long before the castle. Two temples in close proximity to each other, in the southeast of the city centre and near the main railway station, have libraries of considerable importance.

The first of these temples is Osu Kannon Temple, a Shingon sect temple more properly known as Hosho-in, which used to be called to be called Shinpuku-ji. "Osu Kannon" is well-known to the ex-patriot community in Nagoya for the flea market held in its grounds twice every month. This is similar to the famous monthly Toji temple fair in Kyoto and every bit as lively, selling antiques and interesting junk items of every conceivable description and drawing an equally fascinating crowd of elderly ladies, arty and intellectual types and foreign residents and travellers, eager for bargains or just to "take in the scene".

In a quieter corner of the temple is the Shinpuku-ji Bunko (or Osu Bunko), a collection of some 15,000 volumes, many in manuscript form, including some National Treasures. One of these is the oldest extant text of the *Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Matters), Japan's earliest "history" in the form of legend.

Everyone in Nagoya knows "Osu Kannon", but very few are aware of another Shingon temple close by. This Nanatsu-dera ("Seven Temple"), so called, presumably, because it was once a large monastery with, conventionally, "seven" (many) halls. It is now hidden away among ugly commercial buildings and, having been destroyed by incendiary bombing in 1945, has been totally rebuilt, except for one brick storehouse.

The storehouse contains valuable treasures, the true nature of which only came to light in 1990, thanks to the efforts of Ochiai Toshinori, a professor at a Buddhist college in Kyoto. In a number of lacquer chests are contained a "full set of Buddhist scriptures" (*issaikyo*) in just short of 500 volumes, handwritten in the late Heian period, in 1175-1180. They were copied to comply with a vow made by the deputy governor of Owari province. The scrolls and their boxes, some of which carry Buddhist lacquer paintings on the inside, were designated National Treasures in 1990, but since they were

regarded as having only artistic merit and no religious, literary or historical significance, they were downgraded to important Cultural Properties after World War II and a catalogue describing them, published in 1968, was largely ignored.

Professor Ochiai became interested in these neglected manuscripts by chance, and in 1990 he and a group of colleagues investigated the contents of the chests. By comparing them with printed texts and reconstructed manuscripts from Dunhuang, they proved what Professor Ochiai had suspected, that some of the texts belonged to an older and less orthodox tradition than the Chinese canon first printed in the tenth century. Professor Antonino Forte, an Italian Buddhist specialist, regards them as at least as important as the Buddhist religious texts from Dunhuang, in particular, in revealing the heritage of Chinese popular Buddhism and its influence on both popular and élite religious practices in Heian Japan. Professor Ochiai's findings about individual texts and a very readable diary-style account of the investigation by Professor Forte are contained in Ochiai Toshinori, *The Manuscripts of Nanatsudera: A Recently Discovered Treasure-House in Downtown Nagoya*, Italian School of East Asian Studies Occasional papers 3, Kyoto, 1991.

There are a number of other interesting specialist libraries in Nagoya. The city recently built a new arts centre in the downtown area, and that has a small arts library. Both local residents and the foreign community make frequent use of the International Centre's reference library of books and pamphlets in foreign languages, with coverage of Japan and those foreign countries of most significance to Japan and its foreign community, including citizens of the USA, Brazil and Australia.

Australia has a small library of its own in Nagoya, housed in Nanzan University, which is famous for its studies in anthropology and folklore. In 1986, Nanza University, with sponsorship from the Australia-Japan Foundation, set up a Centre for Australian Studies, primarily concerned with social and comparative studies and relations between the two countries. The Centre has a small staff of researchers and a small library of over five thousand books, subscribing to approximately one hundred periodicals. It also has a special collection of legal reports. It is treated as a separate collection of the university library and is open to students and the public on the same conditions as the university library.

Nagoya, despite its image as a stolid industrial city, has a full cultural life and worthy historical foundations. While it is still necessary for scholars, especially in Chinese studies, to go to Tokyo and Kyoto for the full wealth of research material offered by Japan, some bibliographic treasures can be sought out in Nagoya.