

Date: February 27, 2020

JSPS US ALUMNI ASSOCIATION SEMINAR PROGRAM
REPORT

Organizer (Awardee)

Name: Christina Laffin

Position & Affiliation: Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair_

1. TITLE OF SEMINAR “Paper,” Binding, Book: Perspectives from Japan, India, and Tibet
2. DATE(S) February 6, 2020
3. VENUE & CITY, STATE University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia
4. TARGETED RESEARCH AREAS (1) Book history (2) Material culture (3) Bibliography studies
5. NUMBERS OF PARTICIPANTS TOTAL: <u>22</u> persons including <u>2</u> US Alumni Association members -US: (nationality of most not self-evident) persons -FROM OVERSEAS: (nationality of most not self-evident) person(s) including <u>3</u> person(s) from Japan

NOTES FOR REPORT

*Please be sure to include the following contents. (Maximum 5 pages)

- Executive Summary
- Topics Discussed with Outcomes & Future Challenges
- Workshop/Seminar Agenda

Executive Summary

This seminar enabled Dr. Sasaki Takahiro, an eminent specialist of Japanese book history, to present new findings regarding the formats, bindings, and paper production techniques of Japanese traditional or rare books (*wahon*). In response to his introduction into the print and manuscript history of Japanese books, three scholars based at the University of British Columbia offered complementary presentations which brought his content into a global and comparative context. The session culminated in a wide-ranging discussion of current and forthcoming research on book formats and paper used for books, which we then carried into the reception.

Topics Discussed with Outcomes & Future Challenges

The invited seminar presenter, Dr. Sasaki Takahiro, offered an introduction to rare books in Japan focusing on the culture of paper making. In response, three presenters from UBC engaged with the topics he had raised: books and materiality, paper production techniques, and cultural characteristics for each region and time period.

During the discussion which followed, there were numerous queries about book production, reading practices, and the cultural history of books. Audience members encompassed a wide range of scholars from UBC, members of the Vancouver community with an interest in rare books, and artists and writers from Japan.

The event encouraged further Humanities research focusing on the history of materiality and books. The group of scholars who gathered for the event agreed to follow up with further research gatherings which might build upon some of the comparisons made over the course of the event. We expect this may result in greater research collaboration and possibly the development of new pedagogies concerning book history.

Preceding and following the JSPS information session, Dr. Christina Laffin (host scholar and JSPS alumna) received queries from a number of scholars regarding programs available through JSPS, along with a request that a JSPS representative visit the University of British Columbia Okanagan campus, if possible, for a follow-up information session. We are very grateful for the opportunity to publicize opportunities supported by JSPS and to have hosted this eminent expert from Japan at the University of British Columbia.

Workshop/Seminar Agenda

- (1) Lunch available for those joining the JSPS information session
- (2) JSPS informational presentation by Mr. Kunii Hideki
- (3) Questions from audience with follow-up by Mr. Kunii, Dr. Laffin (JSPS alumna), Dr. Christina Yi (JSPS alumna)

- (4) Break, preparation for seminar, brief consultations from UBC representatives
- (5) 30-minute presentation by Dr. Sasaki Takahiro with translation by Dr. Laffin
- (6) Three 10-minute responses by Dr. Adheesh Sathaye, Dr. Dagmar Schwerk, and Dr. Hasan Siddiqui focusing on South Asian traditions of bookmaking
- (7) 45-minute discussion with audience
- (8) Showing of rare books with audience interaction and opportunity to handle books
- (8) Reception with presenters and audience