

Towards a Global Objectification of Japanese Art Data

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Through the JAL 2015 project, I understand that Japan has vast art data; and identify distinctive characteristics of books and visual resources conserved in art museums and research institutions that I visited. Especially, I appreciate being given an opportunity to study possible way to improve accessibility and usability of art data in Japan. The project has enormous significance in promoting the mutual close understanding and approval among the invited librarians/archivists and Japanese people involved including the organizers of the project. Hereafter, I explore further new direction in accessibility and usability of art data in Japan entitled "Towards a Global Objectification of Japanese Art Data."

The term "Global" in the title refers to the world, or the earth, with all its countries, or rather, the communication center where we actively exchange art resources. In other perspective, "Global" is a major theme of discussions for enhancing and disseminating universal knowledge of humankind. Contrarily, a term "localism" of Japanese art database characterizes the limited usability of Japanese art data. Thus I rather believe that we may interpret "Global" as growing positive opportunity of sharing Japanese art resources worldwide, beyond the sphere of their local area.

The ICT revolution in 1990s somewhat gives an impression that it has facilitated sharing today's information over the Web freely. I believe that the revolution only helps disseminate a mass of information, leaving accessibility or accurate and deep traceability to resources significantly restricted. I conceive that information in transborder database is shared and consumed in global activities, but access to local database in some regions by some users is restricted because of its unique regional characteristics. "Localism" of database refers to this limitation in accessibility. In this context, if the issue of "localism" is solved and the art data spreads worldwide over the globalized Internet, a new environment for objectified art resources is created.

Objectification of Japanese art resources, the goal that the organizers of the JAL project aim to achieve, is the first step for us to take a new opportunity to leverage the data. This is attained by collaboration of specialized librarians, resources-collecting-archivists, and related scholars including myself. The participants of the project demonstrate its goal. Aiming to create a new global environment for objectified art resources, three of us discussed and decided to make respective presentations focusing on "sharing," "accessing," and "collaboration." Being the first speaker, I

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presented my study about how databases of art resources must be shared in our global age.

First of all, we believe it necessary to consider the key words of "sharing," "accessing," and "collaboration" in order to create a new global environment for objectified art resources. In the light of the global age, "localism" of the Japanese art databases is characterized by unique isolation.

The Japanese art databases are precious, yet undiscovered to the world. We need to take a constructive approach to disseminate the unknown databases to the world. Promoting dissemination needs improving accessibility in the general public, which in turn illustrates the terms "objectification of Japanese art resources." Our close collaboration in improving accessibility and increasing website traffic will expand opportunity to share resources.

Collection of content is the first step for developing a database of art resources and creation of a database by compiling the content is the second. A database must put the highest priority on the user-friendliness. As an example of collaboration, I suggest that Japanese libraries form a consortium with overseas institutions, or collaborate with databases institutes of Japanese art resources outside Japan, to develop the database platform and interface. Consequently, such collaboration improves accessibility for and increase website traffic of overseas users. If all specialists concerned recognize how important the

objectified art database is, they enhance sharing of the resources. In these efforts, locally limited database of Japanese art resources will be objectified.

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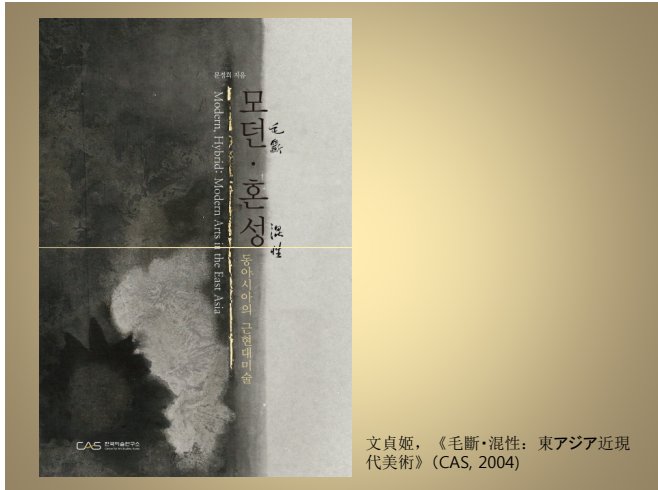
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