

The Tale of the Japanese Folding Screens: A Journey from Japan to Yale (and Back)



Thursday, September 19, 4:00 pm
International Room in Sterling Memorial Library

All are welcome to come and hear the fascinating story of the "Harimaze" folding screens. Housed for much of the last century in the Beinecke as part of the Yale Association of Japan (YAJ) collection, the "Harimaze" includes 27 documents, ranging in date from the early 12th to the mid-18th centuries, which were pasted together on two standing screens. Although at the time this seemed a good idea for transportation and exhibition purposes, the preservation of the documents has remained a concern while attached to the screens.

As a result, the screens have been the focus of a major two-year conservation project undertaken for Yale by the Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo, where the screens were first assembled in the 1930s. The project involved removing each fragile document for cleaning, repair of insect damage and other wear, and re-backing with hand-made papers, which were specially chosen or custom-made and sized for each document. The documents - including decrees issued by the shogunate, letters and petitions related to the business of the great temples of Nara, and other records from Japan's medieval and early modern periods – were returned to Yale in last August and will now be housed separately to protect them from abrasion they experienced while in screen format.

Presenters:

Ellen Hammond, Director, International Collections & Research Support; Head, East Asia Library

Haruko Nakamura, Librarian for Japanese Studies

Daniel Botsman, Professor; Chair, Council on East Asian Studies

The screens were first displayed in December 1934 in a public exhibition in Sterling Memorial Library soon after the collection was donated. There will be display of a few documents on September 19.

There is also a brief slideshow of the story available here:

<http://news.yale.edu/photos/homecoming-harimaze-bu-documents-exemplifies-yale-s-historical-ties-japan> [1]

External link: http://www.library.yale.edu/librarynews/2013/09/the_tale_of_the_japanese_foldi_1... [2]

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Links

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