

DIGITIZATION OF BOOKS OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MONGOLIA

Dear Directors of libraries,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

I greet all of you in this hall of National Library of Japan brightened by light of books. Before introducing to you about digitization of books of the National Library of Mongolia I should briefly introduce to you about the history of creation and development of books and libraries in Mongolia.

Stone books

In caves and on rocks there are many petroglyphs left by Homo sapiens from the time of their very beginning and learning to produce fire. As few examples may be mentioned petroglyph in Three Blue cave, petroglyphs on Bayanlig rock and on Stone River rock. But I don't know whether they were created by Mongols. Anyhow, I'm sure that once they exist in the territory of Mongolia, at least they were by Mongoloids. I had to speak about books but why I'm talking about petroglyphs? Because, from those petroglyphs can be read how those primitive people lived, what they were engaged in and how traveled. Therefore, I call them as books.

Besides, very famous is deer monument of zoomorphic style of ancient Xiongnu period of ancestors of the Mongols (early A.C). Cannot be left without mentioning the stone monument engraved on biography of the king Biligt of Blue Turkey and Tonyukuk monument (VIII century) which promoted clever Minister of Blue Turkey, Tonyukuk. There's a monument called Stone script of Genghis erected in the period of Mongolian Empire of 13th century or in 1225. Here's promoted and made famous marksman Yesunkhei who in 335 fathoms distance shot and hit a target. It's first monument of Mongolian letters found by us.

On Rock of sound (XVII century) were engraved poem of great patriot and poet Tsogt by his knights.

There's a monument dedicated to 226 volumes Mongolian Red Danjuur (mid XX century).

Even today the Mongols still engrave wise teachings of great ancestors, poems of great poets and melodies of great composes on stones to immortalize them.

Stone books are one integral part of nomadic civilization.

Paper books

According to the information known to us the first paper book was written under the name "Secret history of the Mongols". But regrettably its original is not found.

In State Library of Mongolia preserved is the book named "Banzrach" printed from blocks in Mongolian in 14th century.

Birch bark books

The Mongols used to write books on birch bark. One of them was found from the near of Volga river, some of them in Mongolia.

Books written with gold

The Mongols are people inclined to pray to books and worship them. Therefore they created them with gold and silver. From them many books as 100 volumes of "Golden Ganjuur" written gold powder on black papers processed by special method, "Sunduin Jud" or "Basic summary of secrets" written with 52 kg pure gold and silver are preserved in the National Library.

Books written with precious metals and stones

Gold, silver, coral, pearl, mother-pearl, steel, copper, turkeys, lapis lazuli the Mongols call nine jewels. With these precious metals and stones are written Nine precious gems Ganjuur, also books written with seven precious gems and four precious gems.

Silk book

"Refuge" book is written embroidering with needle on silk.

Letters had been used by the Mongols

The Mongols had used several letters as Mongolian letters, rectangular letters, transparent letters, Vagindra letters, Tibetan letters etc. From them rich are monuments written in Mongolian and Tibetan letters. Also many are monuments written in Manjur letters.

From history of library

Mongolia had over nine hundred monasteries. Most of them had printing houses and libraries. Therefore, all them had larger libraries. There can be mentioned Bogd khan palace, Gandantegchilen monastery in capital city, Khamar monastery and Choir monastery. Here should be mentioned that especially museums and libraries founded by Gobi dogshin Noyon Khytygty Danzanravjaa and by Zava Damdin gavji Lama were very rich.

Foundation of national library

National Library of Mongolia was founded in 1921 as Institute of Books. Initiators of the library contributed books from their own collections

and created a library fund with over 2000 books. At that time the library had one employee. In this present building it moved in 1951.

Present condition of the national library

The national library at present is operated with over 80 employees, about 3000000 books and 4 departments. There's also is operated a small museum of exceptionally valued and rare books. The books in Cyrillic fully are comprised in electronic catalogues. Others still are not catalogued. The national library has about 900000 manuscripts and books printed from blocks in Tibetan. There are about 3000 books written by about 100 Mongolian monks in 10 Buddhist religious science fields in Tibetan. The library has a leading position in its collection of Tibetan books, and therefore it draws attention of Mongolists and Tibetan researchers. Electronic catalogues of Tibetan books are being made by American ACIP/Asian Classics Input Project/. This project fully began to be implemented from 2006. In framework of this project the catalogues are made with 22 indexes and at present are completed catalogues of 100000 books. Interesting may be to mention that 985 ex libris of Mongolian monks from those books are photocopied. Those ex libris are made by Mongolian, Tibetan and Chinese letters. They are precious documents evidencing literary culture of the Mongols and literary culture of Mongolian scholars.

All books of the fund of Asian books consisted of Manjurian, Japanese, Vietnamese and Korean books and Western books fund consisted of Russian, English and German books not only digitized but even are not comprised in electronic catalogues.

Beginning of digitization

Digitization of books in the National Library is only at a beginning stage. It should be mentioned that such delay of digitization is connected with economic condition of Mongolia.

But anyhow digitization is being implemented in directions:

1. Digitization of Mongolian manuscripts and books printed from blocks.
2. Digitization of books in Tibetan.

In the first direction the digitization of "Mongol Red Danjuur and Ganjuur's manuscript" according to Indian-Mongolian Government agreement is just completed. In performing this project from Mongolian side participated the national Library and from Indian side Indira Gandhi National Art Center. The goal of this project is to digitize manuscripts, books and materials printed from blocks to multiply to have enough reserve and information fund for utilization by internal and foreign researchers in any time. This project began from September 2006. This

project brought very important contribution to preserving and protecting old manuscripts and books printed from blocks kept in the national library according to the standard of preserving rare and old books. Before while we having only single copies of monument manuscripts and books printed from blocks had to serve to researchers. These books not kept in required humidity and temperature conditions had to be served to researchers which caused worsening their conditions. The building of this national library was built in 1951 and at that time it had 1000000 books but today it has 3000000 books. Therefore there's no need to conceal that rare manuscripts and books printed from blocks are kept in conditions not meeting required conditions. Therefore, there rose the requirement immediately digitize those rare books using modern technique and technology.

Specialists of the library are performing the duties to make lists of books and scriptures, verify every scripture to establish number of pages, determine damaged pages, on beginning of the project receive and register books from funds, make technical verification, scanner them, verify scanned materials, sum up and control.

From the beginning of the project we have done:

1. Mongolian manuscript of Ganjuur kept in the National Library of Mongolia or 68 volumes and
2. Mongolian shunkhan Danjuur 216 volumes are digitized.

We are going to begin to place scanned books in web-site. Digitization and placing in web-site, of course, are connected with automation of the library. At present we have lack of powerful enough computer to read and not yet solved the problem of internal network. Therefore, we still couldn't place them in web-site. But we are working to solve these problems within this year, and therefore from January next year we'll place them in web-site.

The project is finished and Indian side gave over to us the delivered equipment. Therefore, we are going to continue digitization of manuscripts and books printed from blocks by ourselves.

In second direction in the framework of American "ACIP" project we are implementing digitization of Tibetan books and sutras from January 2007.

At present we have done:

1. 110 volumes or 40303 pages of Tibetan manuscript "Jalzetemban" (1671)
2. 87 volumes or 31032 pages of TsaL BAR Ganjuur written with shunkh are digitalized. These works will be further continued.

Our task

In the result of initiation of President Nambar Enkhbayar will begin the construction of a new building of the national library of Mongolia with the

help of Kuwait. The goal of our library is to serve our nation and reach world level. With taking into operation of this building will be eliminated the difficulties I mentioned above, implemented second task and left the first one. In other word, the Mongols who worship books will become able to quench their thirst for books in the building equipped with last scientific and technical achievements and receive all scientific information. Mongolia with long book tradition in this development never can fall behind the world development. Therefore, we can't try gradually to catch up world library development but go abreast with them. This is our goal. It is not a far away goal but an immediate goal. We have full possibility to implement this goal.
Thank you for attention.