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Handwritten Materials in Japanese from O.O. Rosenberg's Personal Archive Kept at the IOM, RAS

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Abstract: This article introduces several handwritten materials in Japanese from the personal archive of O.O. Rosenberg (1888–1919) now kept at the Archive of Orientalists, IOM, RAS. These handwritten texts reveal new details about O.O. Rosenberg's interaction with Japanese Buddhist scholars and publishers before and after the publication of his two dictionaries in 1916 in Japan. In addition to academic activities, O.O. Rosenberg had to deal with financial and legal matters, maintained contacts with printing company staff, discussed various diplomatic procedures. He also had a wide network of contacts in Japan, including other foreigners. Relying on this network and his fluent knowledge of Japanese, handwritten Japanese in particular, O.O. Rosenberg was able to complete his publication projects successfully. This study presents O.O. Rosenberg's dictionaries as an important component of the project led by Th.I. Stcherbatsky to restore the terminology of Sanskrit philosophical treatises. Future work plans outlined by the young scholar demonstrate his exceptional diligence and competence in matters of Oriental philology. All documents, translated from Japanese by A. Lushchenko, are published for the first time.

Key words: O.O. Rosenberg, Th.I. Stcherbatsky, Buddhist studies, Buddhism in Japan, personal archive, 1910s, Japan, correspondence, dictionaries

Preface: Rosenberg's lexicological studies in Japan

O.O. Rosenberg (1888–1919), an eminent disciple of academician Th.I. Stcherbatsky (1866–1942), left an enduring legacy in the field of Buddhist studies and contributed greatly to lexicography and elucidation of the sense of Buddhist philosophical terms.

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He studied Sanskrit and Chinese at the Oriental Faculty of the University of St. Petersburg, then continued his Sanskrit studies at the University of Bonn, Germany, and studied Japanese at the University of Berlin. In 1910 he graduated from the University of St. Petersburg and prepared for an academic career. He was required to write a master's dissertation followed by a doctoral one in the future. The years between 1912–1916 he spent in Japan conducting research at the University of Tokyo and preparing materials for his dissertation. After returning to St. Petersburg Rosenberg continued his work and in 1918 successfully defended his dissertation and obtained the position of professor at the University of St. Petersburg. Unfortunately, circumstances of the Russian Civil War interfered with his professional future. He tried to reach Finland and then Estonia, but he became ill with scarlet fever and died on November 26, 1919.

Japanese-language handwritten materials published for the first time in this article are a part of the archive of O.O. Rosenberg¹. Their significance for the history of Oriental and Buddhist studies is closely tied to research goals set by the academician Th.I. Stcherbatsky for his disciple O.O. Rosenberg.

In Rosenberg's obituary Th.I. Stcherbatsky wrote:

Already during his university time, I had brought to Rosenberg's attention the great significance of the work of Vasubandhu, Abhidharmakośa, and he started on the study of this, since Tibetan, Chinese and Sanskrit sources were abundantly available in the Petersburg Asiatic Museum. When I was in Calcutta in 1911, I came to know the Japanese cleric, Yamakami Sogen, who was then head of the university there, and I learned from him many interesting details concerning the study of Abhidharmakośa in Japan, including the traditional explanation of it, which is still alive there.² I wrote this to Rosenberg, and he decided to go to Japan so as to become familiar, on the site, with the traditional interpretation. The faculty concurred, and granted the necessary funds for the trip.³

¹ These materials attracted attention of T.V. Ermakova who was conducting research on international scholarly ties of the St. Petersburg school of Buddhist studies. A specialist in Japan had to be consulted to make sense of the texts. A.Y. Lushchenko showed interest in the project, correctly identified and deciphered the cursive texts, and translated them with commentaries. This article's preface, written by T.V. Ermakova, describes the context and goals of Rosenberg's research in Japan.

² Present-day researchers confirm this. For details about the Japanese commentarial tradition on the works of Vasubandhu see SHOKEI 1975.

³ The original text is in German. This translation into English is quoted from BARLOW 1998: 51.

Stcherbatsky also characterized Rosenberg's original contribution to the field of lexicography as follows:

In the course of this work, Rosenberg hit upon the idea that it was also possible to order Chinese characters in a way that very closely approximated an alphabetical arrangement. In his large dictionary, Rosenberg could only partially employ this new system, and presented it in a special dictionary under the title: *Arrangement of Chinese Characters according to an alphabetical System with Japanese Dictionary of Eight Thousand Characters and List of Twenty-two Thousand Characters*, Tokyo 1916 (Kōbunsha).⁴

The first part of Rosenberg's dissertation — a dictionary of Buddhist and other terms — greatly contributed to solving one of the most serious problems of Buddhist studies — identification of technical terms used in Buddhist philosophical texts.⁵ Rosenberg explicated his approach in the dictionary's preface. It is quite obvious that conceptually it is based on Stcherbatsky's methodological approach: the history of Buddhism is the history of its Canon transmitted beyond India and preserved eventually in translations. Rosenberg wrote:

The present volume will be followed by essays on Buddhist dogmatics and Buddhist literature. The publication of this Vocabulary first is due to the consideration that without such a lexicographical basis any detailed research must remain greatly hindered.

Up to the present, neither has the Chinese-Japanese Buddhist terminology been codified, nor does there exist any Chinese-Sanskrit dictionary. Such works are however desiderata, and I hope, therefore, that the present volume, which is one of its components is the realization of the awaited triglot work — with the Japanese part however instead of the Tibetan part — may contribute to that parallel study of Indian and Chinese Buddhist literature inaugurated by Julien and Wassiliew.

The importance of the Buddhist literature preserved in Chinese translations in Japan and China is very great, since its opening is

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ For details about Rosenberg's studies of Buddhist philosophical treatises in Japan see OSTROVSKAYA 2009.

equivalent to the reconstruction of a comprehensive literature of India — religious and philosophical — that has been almost entirely lost in the original.⁶

Rosenberg not only pointed out the crucial influence of Buddhism on Japanese spiritual life, but also suggested a path for future investigations:

Moreover, Buddhist studies are a necessary part of Japanese philology. Japanese civilization was brought in by the Buddhist movement in the sixth and seventh centuries, and the influence of Buddhism on the language, literature and art of Japan is very great indeed. A large part of the most important classical literature is the work of Buddhist priests, and knowledge of Buddhist sentiment furnishes the answer to many questions concerning aesthetic Japan. Japanese systematic philosophy, logic and metaphysics are entirely Buddhist, while Japanese ethics, and practical philosophy are greatly influenced by Buddhist thought. Japanese philology must go back to India, and Indian philology will find in Japan abundant material for research awaiting critical examination. It is owing to these considerations that the present vocabulary has been compiled.⁷

The structure and content of Rosenberg's groundbreaking vocabulary reflected the theoretical propositions described above.

The Vocabulary, as a whole, should be considered as composed of the following parts:

a) A General Survey of Buddhist Terms. — The central part is the vocabulary of Buddhist terms (together with the names of men, places and books) contained in various works belonging to various ages and sects in India, China and Japan.

b) A Chinese-Sanskrit Vocabulary. — In order to understand the technical terms, the original Sanskrit equivalents should be considered, and these have been added as far as it was possible. The material scattered about in different Sanskrit-Chinese vocabularies, etc., has been brought together, and rearranged in this Chinese-Sanskrit vocabulary.

c) A Vocabulary of Words connected with Shintō, and Japanese History. — Researches in Japanese Buddhist literature and philology cannot

⁶ ROSENBERG 1916a: 1.

⁷ Ibid.

be separated from their connection with Japanese history and thought. This necessitated the addition of some non-Buddhist elements relating to Japanese history and Shintō.

d) Material for the Study of Comparative Philology. — The study of Buddhist philosophy and religion, and of the history of Japanese civilization, is the main object of this volume, but the material gathered may be used to some extent in the study of comparative philology. The Chinese-Japanese-Sanskrit parallels of words as well as of sounds will show the Indian elements in these two Eastern languages and furnish a contribution to the study of the history of the Chinese and Japanese languages.⁸

There is another very important, but not widely known, part of Rosenberg's heritage: his proposals about future development of lexicographical studies.

Upon his return from Japan O.O. Rosenberg sent an explanatory note to the Academy of Sciences which was presented by S.F. Oldenburg at the meeting of the Department of Historical Sciences and Philology of the Russian Academy of Sciences on September 18, 1918.⁹ In this important document Rosenberg once again argues for the inadequacy of Japanese traditional dictionaries for work with Buddhist writings. It is significant that in this regard he expresses a desire to teach a special course on the study of ideographic writing. Rosenberg's statement about the need for dictionaries adapted specifically for work with Buddhist texts is fundamentally important since it was precisely this type of work that was relevant for St. Petersburg Buddhology.

O.O. Rosenberg realized that Buddhist texts in Japan were predominantly preserved in Chinese script and this led him to compile lists of ancient forms of characters based on the Chinese dictionary *Shuowen Jiezi* 說文解字 (*Analytical Dictionary of Characters*, ca. 100 CE). In addition, the need to work with texts written in cursive forms of Chinese characters explains why he was also compiling lists of cursive characters. O.O. Rosenberg did not, however, confine himself to classical themes. He also worked on transforming the Inouye's Japanese-English dictionary¹⁰ according to the

⁸ ROSENBERG 1916a: 1–2.

⁹ ROSENBERG 1918: 1740–1745.

¹⁰ INOUE 1909. Inouye Jukichi (1862–1929). Japanese translator and writer. He was sent to England by his family, educated in English and after returning to homeland was employed as a

new system he developed. Unfortunately, these projects were not completed due to his untimely death.

Concrete circumstances of Rosenberg's life and work in Japan become clear from his letters to relatives and Th.I. Stcherbatsky. Rosenberg often mentions Japan's high cost of living, his low income and various payments related to his work. For instance, he made payments to the printing company and to his assistants for lexicographical work.¹¹

Handwritten materials from O.O. Rosenberg's personal archive

In 1916 O.O. Rosenberg published two dictionaries in Japan: *Introduction to the study of Buddhism according to material preserved in Japan and China, Part 1: Vocabulary* (*Bukkyō kenkyū meijishū 仏教研究名辞集*)¹² and *Arrangement of the Chinese characters according to an alphabetical system with Japanese dictionary of 8000 characters and list of 22000 characters* (*Kanjiten: godan hairesu 漢字典: 五段排列*).¹³ Both works occupy a prominent place in the history of Buddhist studies and Japanese lexicography of the early 20th c. Not much is known about the preparation stage that preceded their publication. O.O. Rosenberg does acknowledge the input of Japanese scholars and assistants in the prefaces, but details of his communication with the Japanese remain obscure due to scarcity of available materials.

Fortunately, several handwritten texts in Japanese from the personal archive of O.O. Rosenberg, kept at the Archive of Orientalists at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts RAS (St. Petersburg, Russia), clarify the context to some extent. Most of them have not been thoroughly studied before and provide valuable information related to O.O. Rosenberg's stay in Japan and his scholarly activities there. Available materials¹⁴ can be grouped into four sets:

tutor at the Tokyo University. Then he worked as translator at different Japanese legations. He compiled dictionaries and also wrote books to elucidate things Japanese to foreigners.

¹¹ In a letter to his mother he wrote, "I am forced to be frugal". See VIGASIN 2008: 467.

¹² ROSENBERG 1916a.

¹³ ROSENBERG 1916b.

¹⁴ The Archive of Orientalists at the IOM, RAS, found 47, op. 1, items 35–38.

1) Financial documents: receipts signed by Japanese assistants confirming that they were paid by O.O. Rosenberg for their work on the *Introduction to the study of Buddhism according to material preserved in Japan and China, Part 1: Vocabulary*. Each receipt contains the amount paid, the duration of work, the name, signature and date.

2) A legal document: a book publishing contract between O.O. Rosenberg and the publisher Kashima Chōjirō (鹿島長次郎, 1863–1926), the president of the Kōbunsha publishing company in Tokyo. It specifies legal terms for publishing the *Chinese character dictionary*.

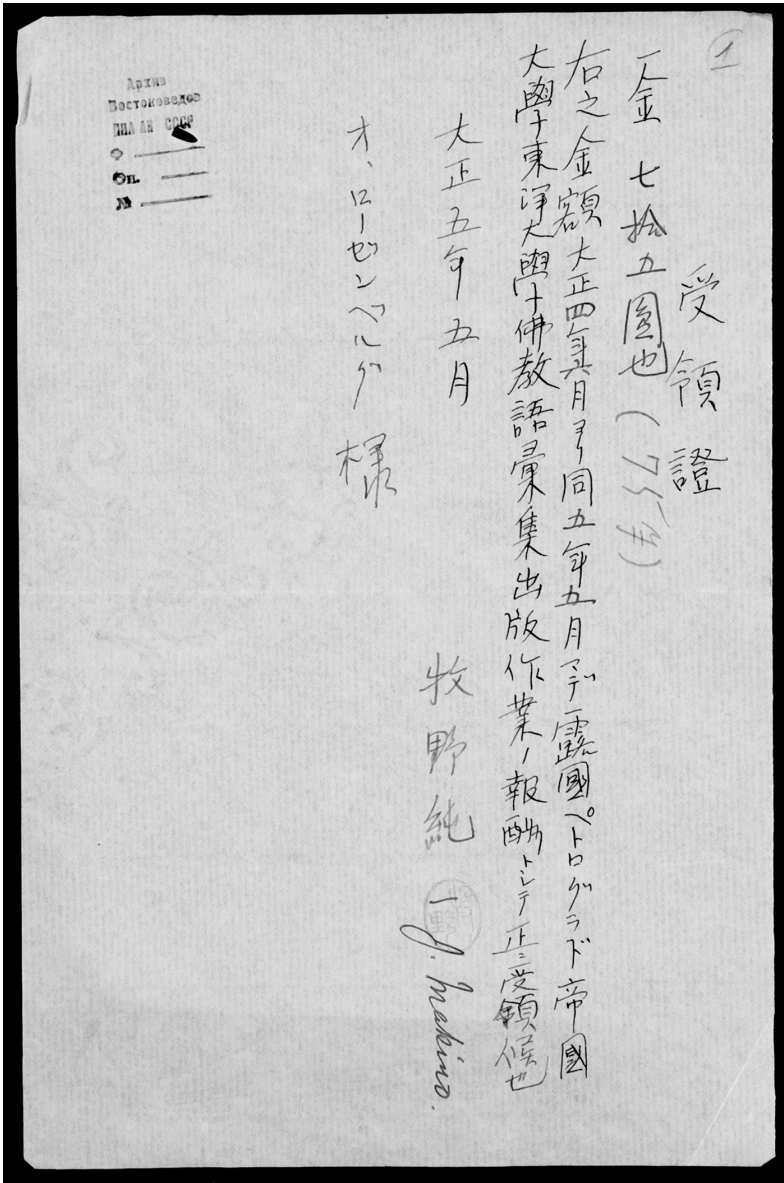
3) Several letters and postcards written by the Japanese and sent to O.O. Rosenberg.

4) O.O. Rosenberg's notebook with handwritten personal names and addresses in alphabetical order. Many Japanese business cards are found between the pages of the notebook.

Although these materials do not give a full picture of O.O. Rosenberg's interaction with the Japanese and tend to highlight only specific episodes, they still provide sufficient documentary evidence about a wide range of tasks and problems that O.O. Rosenberg had to face and tackle to bring his scholarly projects successfully to completion. In this article only some of the materials are introduced and the rest are expected to be published in the future.

Let us first consider one of the receipts from one of Japanese specialists who were hired by O.O. Rosenberg as assistants. In the "Introduction" to the *Introduction to the study of Buddhism* he writes: "The compiler is indebted for assistance of various kinds, for suggestions, help in proof-reading etc., to Prof. J. Takakusu, Dr. U. Wogihara, Dr. K. Watanabe, Mr. C. Ikeda, Mr. K. Itō (Shingon sect), Mr. B. Matsubara (Jōdo sect), Mr. T. Satō (Zen sect), Mr. J. Makino (Japanese history) and other friends".¹⁵ The following is the text of the receipt from Makino Jun'ichi who apparently checked historical information for O.O. Rosenberg:

¹⁵ ROSENBERG 1916a: 4–5.



Pl. 1.

Receipt from Makino Jun'ichi¹⁶

¹⁶ The Archive of Orientalists at the IOM, RAS, found 47, op. 1, item 36, f. 1. The receipt (21.3 cm long and 14 cm wide) is written on thick paper, light yellow in colour.

受領證

一 金 七拾五圓也 (75 ¥)

右之金額大正四年六月ヨリ同五年五月マデ露國ペトログラド帝國
大學東洋大學佛教語彙集出版作業ノ報酬トシテ正ニ受領候也

大正五年五月

牧野純一

J. Makino

オ、ローゼンベルグ様

Receipt

Amount 75 yen (75¥)

I have indeed received the amount given above as payment for the work on the publication of the Buddhist dictionary of the Russian Petrograd Imperial University, Oriental Institute [Faculty], from June of the year Taishō 4 [1915] to May of the year Taishō 5 [1916].

May of the year Taishō 5

Makino Jun'ichi (seal) J. Makino

To Mr. O. Rosenberg

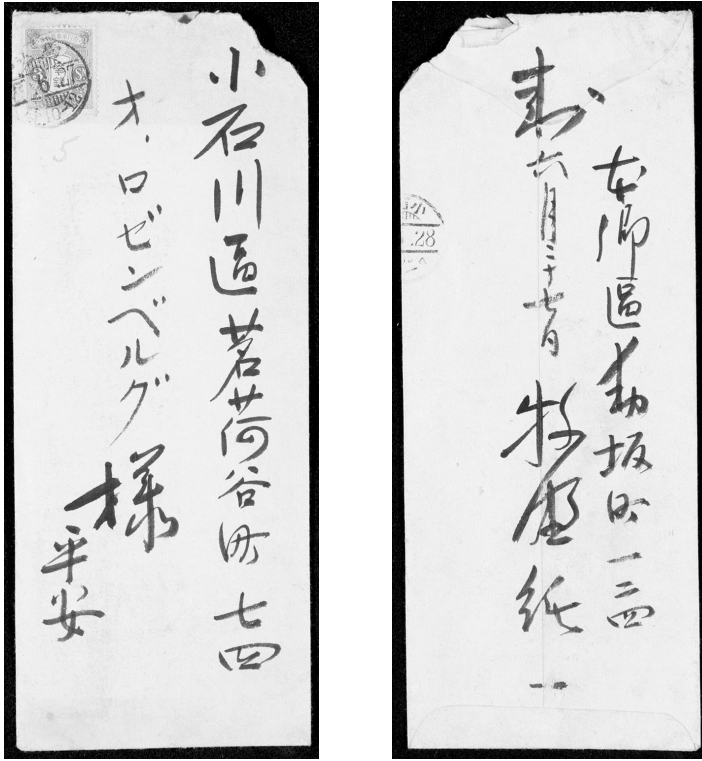
Almost certainly Makino Jun'ichi (1885–1929)¹⁷ is the author of the book on Japanese history *Historical study of public welfare policy of the Go-Hōjō clan* (*Go-Hōjō shi minsei shiron* 後北条氏民政史論, 1916). *Biographical dictionary of present-day Buddhists* gives additional details about him: Makino Jun'ichi was the chief priest of Shōfuku-ji (正福寺) temple in a village in Mie prefecture, Buddhist priest of the True Pure Land School, and a bachelor (*bungakushi* 文学士) of an Imperial university.¹⁸

This receipt is a document that supplies financial details, specifies the duration of assistance and, in general, unambiguously demonstrates that O.O. Rosenberg, apart from Buddhist studies, had to deal with practical and financial aspects of his publication project that included hiring Japanese scholars.

The next manuscript is a letter from Makino Jun'ichi with advice concerning the *Chinese character dictionary*. Names and addresses of the letter's sender and recipient are written on the envelope:

¹⁷ According to information in National Diet Library bibliographic records. <https://id.ndl.go.jp/auth/ndlna/00039883> (accessed on 13.05.2024).

¹⁸ *Gendai bukkyōka jinmei jiten* 1917: 509.



Pl. 2-3.

Envelope of the letter from Makino Jun'ichi (recto and verso)¹⁹

小石川區茗荷谷町七四
オ. ロゼンベルグ様 平安

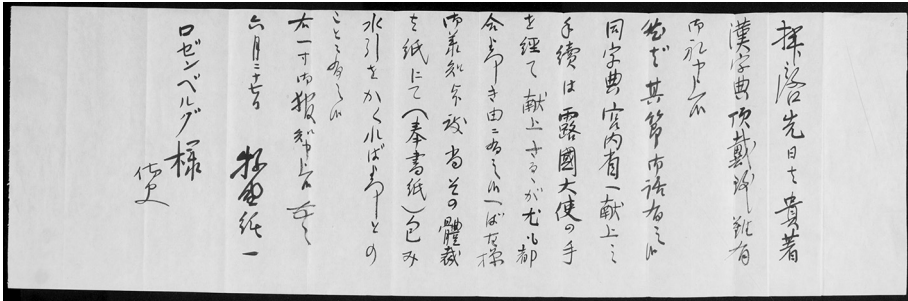
本郷區動坂町一二四
封 六月二十七日 牧野純一

Koishikawa-ku Myōgadani-chō 74
To Mr. O. Rosenberg (with good news)

Hongō-ku Dōzaka-chō 124
“Seal” June 27 Makino Jun'ichi

¹⁹ The Archive of Orientalists at the IOM, RAS, found 47, op. 1, item 38, f. 5. The paper envelope (21 cm long and 8.4 cm wide) has a stamp on it.

The text of the letter is as follows:



Pl. 4.

Letter from Makino Jun'ichi²⁰

拝啓 先日は貴著
 漢字典頂戴致し難有
 御礼申上候
 然ば其節御話有之候
 同字典宮内省へ献上の
 手續は露國大使の手
 を経て献上さるゝが尤も都
 合よろしき由に有之候へば左様
 御承知被下度尚その體裁
 は紙にて（奉書紙）包み
 水引をかくればよろしとの
 ことに有之候
 右一寸御報知申上候 頓首

六月二十七日 牧野純一
 ロゼンベルグ様 侍史

²⁰ The Archive of Orientalists at the IOM, RAS, found 47, op. 1, item 38, f. 6. The letter (58.2 cm long and 18.2 cm wide) is written on thin white paper (one side only) that is folded to fit into the envelope.

Dear Sir,

Recently I have received your work, *Chinese character dictionary*, and express my gratitude to you.

As for the formalities concerning the presenting of this *Character dictionary* to the Department of the Imperial Household, [the matter] that we discussed on that occasion, please be aware that it is most convenient to present it through the hands of the Russian ambassador. In addition, as for the [book's] appearance, it should be wrapped in paper (*hōsho* paper [high-quality white paper]) and tied with *mizuhiki* [decorative paper cord, usually red and white].

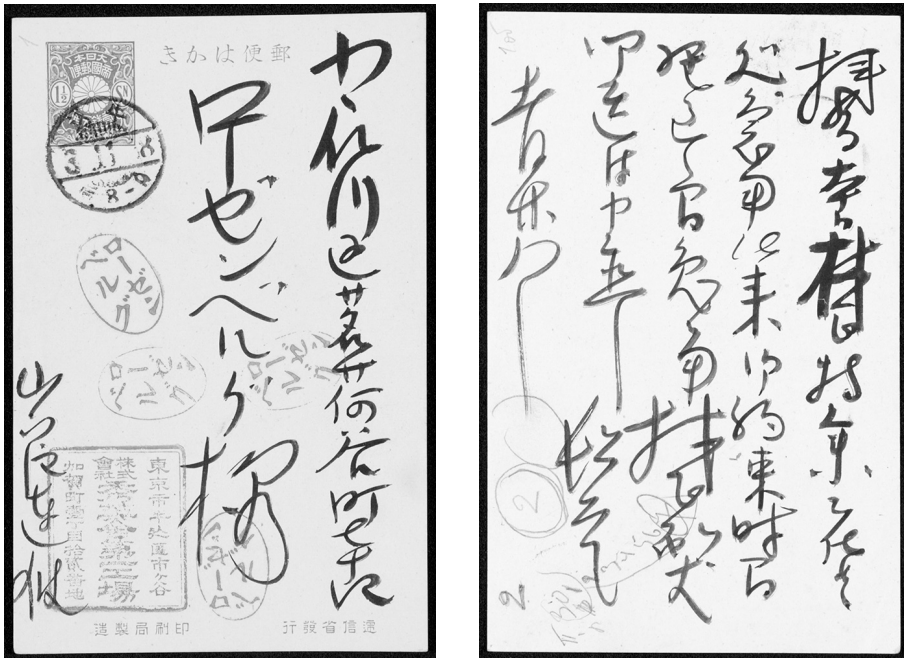
[In the message] above, I briefly inform you [about this]. Respectfully yours,

June 27 Makino Jun'ichi
To Mr. Rosenberg respectfully

This letter reveals some details about the situation right after the publication of O.O. Rosenberg's character dictionary. In this case Makino Jun'ichi acts not as assistant or editor of the dictionary, but as an advisor and friend suggesting how to submit the recently published character dictionary to the Department of the Imperial Household. O.O. Rosenberg's network of Japanese colleagues, friends and acquaintances was involved in various capacities in the production and later promotion of his dictionaries. This letter is a good example showcasing friendly ties between them and eagerness of the Japanese to support and provide advice to O.O. Rosenberg. Submitting the new dictionary to the Japan's Department of the Imperial Household via the Russian ambassador²¹ testifies to O.O. Rosenberg's involvement in high-level diplomatic matters. Also, this letter is written in semi-cursive handwriting that is quite clear, but still requires special training. O.O. Rosenberg's fluency in Japanese, including his mastery of handwritten Japanese, enabled him to interact confidently with the Japanese.

The following is a postcard sent by a worker of the Shūeisha Printing Company, possibly an editor or proofreader, to O.O. Rosenberg.

²¹ In 1916 Vasilii Nikolaevich Krupensky (1869–1945) was the ambassador of the Russian Empire to Japan.



Pl. 5-6.

Postcard from Yamashita Shimeo²²

小石川区茗荷谷町七十四
ローゼンベルグ様
山下注連雄

Koishikawa-ku Myōgadani-chō 74
To Mr. Rosenberg
Yamashita Shimeo

拝啓 本日校正持参可仕之²³
処急用出来御約束時間

²² The Archive of Orientalists at the IOM, RAS, found 47, op. 1, item 38, f. 1 (recto and verso). The postcard is 14 cm long and 9 cm wide.

²³ Unclear handwritten character. Another possibility is 候. The translation stays the same.

馳過之間急當²⁴校正刷文
御送はや置候 頓首
十一月廿八日

Dear Sir,

Today I was supposed to bring proofreading [texts], but an urgent matter arose and I missed the agreed time, therefore in haste I am now sending you only these galley proofs.

Respectfully yours,
November 28

The postcard gives us a glimpse of O.O. Rosenberg's correspondence with technical staff of the above-mentioned Japanese printing company in Tokyo about proofreading and galley proofs. Most likely the above postcard was written in November of 1915 before publication of the dictionary *Introduction to the study of Buddhism* in June of 1916. It is a great fortune that this postcard, one of the numerous ephemera of daily life and work, was preserved by O.O. Rosenberg. It is also noteworthy that a business card of Yamashita Shimeo, the sender of this postcard, is found inside O.O. Rosenberg's notebook described above. It is impossible to know how often they met or communicated with each other while preparing the dictionary for publication. In the "Introduction" to the *Introduction to the study of Buddhism* O.O. Rosenberg briefly thanks this company: "To the Shūeisha Printing Company due acknowledgement must be made, as the work of printing presented many technical difficulties".²⁵ This postcard is a tangible remnant of presumably intense efforts of both sides, O.O. Rosenberg and the printing company, to solve these technical difficulties.

²⁴ Unclear handwritten character. 用 is also possible. In this case, the translation is "only the urgent galley proofs".

²⁵ ROSENBERG 1916a: 5. In addition to technical difficulties, Rosenberg also faced financial troubles. In his letter to Th.I. Stcherbatsky (5 December 1914) Rosenberg writes that preparation work is finished, but actual printing will start in January because the printing company is overloaded with orders such as New Year journals. The work's completion is planned for April-May. However, it is necessary to sign the contract with the printing company now [in December 1914] and also make a prepayment of 300 yen. For this reason, Rosenberg asks Stcherbatsky to request additional 400 yen from the University (VIGASIN 2008: 496).

Special mention should be made of the cursive hasty handwriting of the postcard. In the epistolary practice of the Japanese in the first half of the 20th c. and earlier it was usual to write in cursive handwriting. However, even among foreigners in Japan who could speak Japanese and read printed texts, not many were able to decipher Japanese cursive handwritten texts and this ability required many years of training and practice. This postcard highlights O.O. Rosenberg's proficiency in Japanese, including its handwritten forms. Successful publishing of the dictionaries was based in part on his ability to communicate with Japanese editors such as Yamashita Shimeo.

Finally, a brief mention should be made about O.O. Rosenberg's network of acquaintances in Japan that included other foreigners. For example, O.O. Rosenberg's notebook contains a business card that he received from the Reverend S.H. Wainright²⁶. In the yearbook for 1917 *The Christian Movement in the Japanese Empire* S.H. Wainright as the author of the chapter "Annual review of religious literature" included a brief review of O.O. Rosenberg's *Introduction to the study of Buddhism* published in 1916. He wrote:

Very notable is the first published instalment of Buddhist research work conducted by Mr. O. Rosenberg, of the University of Petrograd. This was published during the year under the general title of *Bukkyo Kenkyu, Meijishu* (Introduction to the study of Buddhism). Part *First*, which was published during the year, and is for sale at the *Kyobunkwan*, is a Vocabulary. It contains five hundred and twenty-seven pages, besides an index. The *Introduction to the Study of Buddhism* is based upon material preserved in Japan and China. The *Vocabulary* is a survey of Buddhist Terms and Names arranged accordng [sic] to Radicals with Japanese Readings and Sanscrit [sic] Equivalents. It has a supplement of Terms and Names relating to *Shinto* and Japanese History.²⁷

It is likely that S.H. Wainright's acquaintance with O.O. Rosenberg made him aware of the new publication and led him to include its review in this yearbook.

²⁶ Samuel Hayman Wainright (Wainwright) (1863–1950) represented the American Methodist Episcopal Church in Japan as General Secretary of Christian Literature Society in Japan. It is possible that S. Wainright was the unidentified "pastor" (reverend) mentioned by O.O. Rosenberg in his letter to his father dated 23 January 1913. See VIGASIN 2008: 474.

²⁷ *The Christian Movement in the Japanese Empire* 1917: 225.

Conclusion

Handwritten materials in Japanese kept at the Archive of Orientalists at the IOM, RAS shed light on previously unnoticed details of O.O. Rosenberg's work and interaction with the Japanese before and after the publication of his two dictionaries in 1916. It is clear that during his stay in Japan O.O. Rosenberg maintained a wide and diverse network of contacts. In addition to academic activities with prominent Japanese Buddhist scholars and priests, he was busy with financial and legal matters (publishing contract, payments to Japanese assistants, receipts), technical issues (proofreading, galley proofs, correspondence with printing company staff), discussion of diplomatic procedures (correspondence about presenting his dictionary to the Department of the Imperial Household of Japan via Russian ambassador). Maintaining contacts with other foreigners (such as S.H. Wainright) resulted in his dictionary being mentioned in English-language publications by Christian missionaries in Japan. Relying on a wide network of contacts in Japan, O.O. Rosenberg was able to accomplish a number of difficult tasks that accompanied publication of the two dictionaries in Japan. His fluent knowledge of Japanese (scholarly, epistolary, Buddhist, legal), and handwritten Japanese in particular, made it possible to complete his publication projects successfully. The three handwritten materials discussed above demonstrate clearly the importance of ephemera in clarifying circumstances of scholarly work.

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