

# **Luber collection of Japan Group II material**

**Ms. Coll. 1326**

**Finding aid prepared by Alexandra M. Wilder.**

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Last updated on November 13, 2017.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2017 September 26

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
<b>Creator</b>	Luber, Gilbert, -1999
<b>Creator</b>	Luber, Shirley
<b>Title</b>	Luber collection of Japan Group II material
<b>Call number</b>	Ms. Coll. 1326
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1980-2011
<b>Extent</b>	0.5 linear foot ((1 box))
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>Gilbert Luber (1918-1999) and his wife Shirley Luber collected and sold traditional and contemporary Japanese prints at the Gilbert Luber Gallery in Philadelphia from 1980 to 2000. They also founded and ran the Japan Group II, an interest group relating to the arts and culture of Japan. This collection documents the administration of the Japan Group II and includes records relating to event planning, financial planning, group chronology, legal records, meeting minutes, member obituaries, membership lists, newsletters, notices and group correspondence, and photographs.</p>

**Cite as:**

Luber collection of Japan Group II material, 1980-2011, Ms. Coll. 1326, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania.

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## Biography/History

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Gilbert Luber (1918-1999) and his wife Shirley Luber collected and sold traditional and contemporary Japanese prints at the Gilbert Luber Gallery in Philadelphia from 1980 to 2000. They founded and ran Japan Group II, an interest group relating to the arts and culture of Japan.

Japan Group II, which was started in 1980 and dissolved in 2011, was a membership-based group of people in Philadelphia with an interest in the arts and culture of Japan. The group met regularly and took trips to galleries and museums in Philadelphia and beyond to see and discuss Japanese exhibitions. For instance, in 2009, the group visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City to see the exhibition, "Art of the Samurai: Japanese Arms and Armor, 1156-1868," as well as "Serizawa: Master of Japanese Textile Design" at the Japan Society.

Gilbert Luber graduated from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania in 1940. Gilbert and Shirley Luber's interest in Japanese art and culture began in the 1970s, when they made their first visit to Japan. Once they returned to Philadelphia, Gilbert began an in-depth study of Japanese prints, and he and Shirley returned to Japan the following year to make more purchases, a practice they continued for the next 20 years. Their collecting took them to Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Bali, and China (Gallup, 2013). Gilbert sold Japanese art out of his and Shirley's Center City Philadelphia home until 1976, when their daughter Marilyn opened a gallery at 1921 Walnut Street for her parents to display and sell their collection. Later, Gilbert and Shirley Luber moved the gallery to its final location at 1220 Walnut Street. Although the gallery officially closed in 2000, Shirley continues to sell Japanese art from the Gilbert Luber Collection through an online gallery.

Shirley Luber is a specialist in antique and contemporary Japanese graphics. She graduated from the Moore College of Art and Design in 1947 with a B.A. in Fashion Illustration. She began her career in the Art Department of *The Washington Post*. Following this, she spent nine years in Geneva, Switzerland, with her husband and daughter, where she studied painting while continuing to work as a commercial artist. Upon the family's return to the United States, Shirley Luber created ecclesiastical needlepoint designs for churches and synagogues. Shirley continues to organize exhibitions of selected Japanese works, most recently at Midori Gallery in Coconut Grove, Florida, and at the Arthur Ross Gallery at the University of Pennsylvania. She is a member of the Japan American Society of Greater Philadelphia, and an active member and curator of several exhibitions at the Cosmopolitan Club in Philadelphia, as well as a volunteer at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. At Moore College of Art and Design, she is a board member of the Alumnae Association, lectures about Japanese prints and shares her expertise with students, and serves on the Advisory Board of The Art Shop at Moore (Moore Alumni Bios).

The Lubers donated their extensive collection of books on Japanese art and Japan to the University of Pennsylvania Libraries in 2013. The Luber Collection is a multi-lingual selection of over 1,300 volumes on Japanese art, art history, and culture from the pre-modern period to the 1990s. A strength of this collection is its emphasis on 20th-century Japanese printing and other art forms. This collection formed the basis of an exhibition at the Kislak Center two years later, entitled "Representing Modern Japan: The

Luber Collection of Art Books," which was on exhibit from March 16 to June 12, 2015 (Penn Libraries Events & Exhibitions).

**Works Cited:**

Gallup, Katie. 2013, November 26. Penn Libraries Press Release. "Penn Libraries' book collection grows thanks to a generous gift from the family of a Philadelphia-based dealer and collector in Japanese art." Retrieved from <https://www.library.upenn.edu/publications/luber.html>  
Moore College of Art and Design. Alumni Bios: Shirley Luber. Retrieved from <https://moore.edu/about-moore/moore-stories/alumni-stories/2013/08/30/shirley-luber7>  
Penn Libraries Events & Exhibitions. "Representing Modern Japan: The Luber Collection of Art Books." Retrieved from <http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/luber.html>

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## Scope and Contents

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This collection consists of records regarding the administration of Japan Group II, an interest group relating to the arts and culture of Japan, which was founded in 1980 and run by Gilbert Luber in Philadelphia from its founding until 1999. After Gilbert Luber's death in 1999, Shirley Luber ran the group until 2011 when the group was disbanded.

Records in this collection are arranged within the following files: event planning (group art gallery and museum trips, and group dinners); financial records (banking statements, membership dues, and expenditures); group chronology (listing of group trips, newsletters, and other noteworthy events); legal records (employer identification number registration, and 509(a)(2) designation documents); meeting minutes (meetings general members, and meetings of event committee); member obituaries (Joseph Gering and Isadore Lichstein); membership lists (names, addresses, and phone numbers); newsletters (#1 through #70); notices and group correspondence (primarily letters from the group president to members); notices and group correspondence (primarily letters from the group president to members); and photographs (group dinner at unidentified restaurant, and unidentified home featuring Japanese-style garden and interior design).

Note that the newsletters comprise the bulk of the content in this collection, and the collection includes newsletter #1 through #70, the last newsletter released by Japan Group II; however, newsletters #5, 33, 45, and 50 are missing.

Subjects within the notices and group correspondence file primarily concern upcoming meetings and trips, as well as membership renewals.

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## Administrative Information

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University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2017 September 26

Finding aid prepared by Alexandra M. Wilder.

## **Access Restrictions**

This collection is open for research use.

## **Use Restrictions**

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## **Source of Acquisition**

Gift of Shirley Luber, 2016.

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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### **CORPORATE NAME(S)**

- Japan Group II.

### **FORM/GENRE(S)**

- Financial records
- Legal documents
- Membership lists
- Newsletters
- Photographs

### **GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)**

- Japan--Social life and customs

### **SUBJECT(S)**

- Art, Japanese
- Art--Societies, etc.
- Theater--Japan

## Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Event planning (group art gallery and museum trips and group dinners), 1981-2005.	1	1
Financial records (banking statements, membership dues, and expenditures), 1980-2011.	1	2
Group chronology (listing of group trips, newsletters, and other noteworthy events), 1980-2003.	1	3
Legal records (employer identification number registration and 509(a)(2) designation documents), 1980-1983.	1	4
Meeting minutes (meetings of general members and meetings of event committee), 1980-1988.	1	5
Member obituaries (Joseph Gering and Isadore Lichstein), 1990.	1	6

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Membership lists (names, addresses, and phone numbers), 1983-2009.	1	7
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Newsletters (#1 through #70), 1980-2011.	1	8
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Notices and group correspondence (primarily letters from the group president to members), 1980-2011.	1	9
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Photographs (group dinner at unidentified restaurant and unidentified home featuring Japanese-style garden and interior design), circa 1990s.	1	10
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