



Versión en INGLÉS



The invisible of the International Course on Paper Conservation in Latin America: Meeting East

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Abstract

The International Course on Paper Conservation in Latin America: Meeting East, with headquarters at the Coordinación Nacional de Conservación del Patrimonio Cultural (CNCPC) of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH), and organized along with Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties (TNRICP) and ICCROM, has aimed to be an input in the specialization of paper conservators in Ibero-America from the learning of traditional Japanese techniques and their application in Western heritage. From the beginning of this course in 2012, 70 students from 27 countries have participated, there have been seven face-to-face seminar editions and one webinar. This issue of *CR. Conservación y Restauración* journal is an opportunity to share all the stages of the course: previous, during, and after work, which have required mixed efforts that may seem invisible, yet they have left a testimony of their trajectory and a path of so many little details on their preparation and organization that have made them possible.

Keywords

Paper conservation; international course; organization course; Japanese techniques of paper conservation.

From 2012 to 2020, seven face-to-face editions and one webinar of the International Course on Paper Conservation in Latin America: Meeting East have been held at the Coordinación Nacional de Conservación del Patrimonio Cultural (CNCPC)¹ of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH)². This paper is intended to show and acknowledge the joint efforts for its execution and share the planification, organization, and preparation work before, during, and after every edition. Additionally, mentioning the details of the course seeks to recognize all the collaborators and leave a testimony about their trajectory.

¹ National Agency for Cultural Heritage Conservation (note from the translator).

² National Institute of Anthropology and History (note from the translator).



The course is organized by the CNCPC, the general coordinator is the conservator Marie Vander Meeren³ who has defined her team with the staff of the Taller de Documentos Gráficos (TDG)⁴ together with the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties (TNRICP), with the collaboration of Doctor Masato Kato⁵ as the coordinator of the Japanese team who has invited recognized specialists in paper conservation from different institutions and studios from Japan, and ICCROM⁶.

The purpose of the course is to learn traditional Japanese paper conservation techniques and their adaptation to the conservation of Western heritage. Is a theoretical and practical course that lasts between two and three weeks aimed at specialists in paper conservation of Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain, and Portugal.

The work for the preparation and development of the course commits us to find coincidence spots between conservators with different working ways, thus leading to learning between organizers, teachers, and students. The narration of this article will focus on the detail of the work undertaken by the TDG of the CNCPC.

Background

The traditional Japanese paper conservation techniques are a potentially valuable tool in favor of the conservation of Western heritage; however, to take advantage of them, a learning, assimilation, adaptation, and practice process is necessary.

The 2011 seminar

In 2011, the CNCPC held the evaluation seminar: The Japanese techniques applied on the conservation-restoration of paper Western heritage,⁷ in which specialists in paper conservation from different Iberoamerican⁸ countries were invited to share their experience in the adaptation and application of traditional Japanese paper conservation techniques⁹ in the Western heritage.

³ Marie Vander Meeren is paper conservator of the Taller de Documentos Gráficos (TDG) –Documentary Heritage Conservation Studio— at CNCPC. She has a 30-year career in the conservation and restoration of the documentary heritage in Mexico. Her work in the preventive conservation of documentary archives, advising, teaching and research stands out. Between 2016 and 2019, she was president of the Consejo de Conservación-Restauración de Monumentos Muebles e Inmuebles por destino (Conservation-Restoration of Movable and Immovable by destination Monuments Council). In 1997 and 2012. She attended the course of Japanese Paper Conservation (JPC) in Japan. ATDG, Reseña curricular del Curso internacional de conservación de papel en América Latina. Un encuentro con Oriente, 2019.

⁴ The staff of the TDG that has been collaborating in the different editions of the course is mentioned at the end of the text.

⁵ Doctor Masato Kato is a titular researcher of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, at the TNRICP; he is a specialist in paper production sciences, and he is the coordinator of the Japanese Paper Conservation Course (JPC), in collaboration with ICCROM. He is the author of several articles about production and conservation materials, techniques, and tools for paper and documentary Japanese heritage. ATDG, Reseña curricular del Curso internacional de conservación de papel en América Latina. Un encuentro con Oriente, 2019.

⁶ The course was included in ICCROM's LATAM program (2008-2019), which was a platform driven by restorer Valerie Magar Meurs whose purpose focused on fostering tools to strengthen institutional collaboration between countries in support of the conservation of cultural heritage in Latin America and the Caribbean, promoting exchange and communication between professionals. Although the LATAM program concluded in 2019, ICCROM continues its collaboration with the course to date. ATDG, Presentación de la CNCPC, Curso internacional de conservación de papel en América Latina. Un encuentro con Oriente, 2014.

⁷ The evaluation seminar took place from December 6 to 13, 2011. It was organized by the CNCPC, the TNRICP, within the LATAM program of ICCROM and had the collaboration of ADABI MÉXICO (Support for the Development of Archives and Libraries of Mexico, A.C.).

⁸ The specialists in paper conservation that assisted were Paloma Mujica (Chile), Patricia Gaviola (Argentina), Beatriz Haspo (Brazil), Florencia Gear (Argentina), Susana Meden (Argentina), Luis Crespo (Spain), Soledad Correa (Chile), Alejandra Odor (Mexico), Marie Vander Meeren (Mexico), Masato Kato (Japan), and Katrina Simila (ICCROM).

⁹ Paper specialists attending the Japanese Paper Conservation (JPC) of the TNRICP and ICCROM were convened.



During the seminar, the convened participants agreed that the courses are given by the Japanese specialists generally share basic traditional information about their materials, tools, and techniques; however, to extrapolate this knowledge it was necessary, on one hand, a process of sensitivity and understanding of the possibilities Japanese techniques offer, and on the other, a broad experience in paper conservation in general, e.g., knowledge about the characteristics, constituent materials, and paper manufacturing techniques, as well as its behavior in presence of the damage factors and conservation processes. The need for an adaptation process for its use was one of the seminar conclusions and motivations for the course initiative.



Figure 1. Participants of the evaluation seminar: Las técnicas japonesas aplicadas a la conservación y restauración de obras de papel occidental. *Image: Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2011.*

The first course

After the seminar results, agreements between the participants were established and the benefit of the course was determined. The first one, held in 2012,¹⁰ was coordinated by Marie Vander Meeren and Masato Kato, for this project other Iberoamerican specialist¹¹ joined. At that time, a commitment among the organizers was established: to carry out the course for five consecutive years, so that at the end of that period the results could be analyzed, modifications could be proposed, and if necessary, its continuity could be evaluated.

It is worth mentioning that the course for Ibero-America was intended to be an option and an opportunity for the Spanish-speaking specialists since the courses on Japanese techniques are usually taught in English, as is a large part of the bibliography on this subject.

¹⁰ The first edition of the International Course on Paper Conservation in Latin America: Meeting East was held in Mexico City at the facilities of the CNCPC from October 17 to 30, 2012.

¹¹ The specialists in paper conservation that participated in the seminar in 2011 who joined the course project were Masato Kato from Japan, Luis Crespo from Spain, and Florencia Gear from Argentina. The invited teachers to the 2012 edition of the course are listed at the end of the text.



Figure 2. Participants of the first edition of the International Course on Paper Conservation in Latin America: Meeting East, 2012. Image: Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2012

The contents and general structure of the course

During its different editions, the course has had a duration of two to three weeks and the topics are taught through presentations, demonstrations, and practices. It is divided into two stages: the first, called the “Japanese stage”, is taught by Japanese specialists and is focused on sharing basic information about their techniques, materials, and traditional tools for paper conservation. The second, known as the “Latin stage”, is taught by Iberoamerican specialists in paper conservation, some of whom have been part of the TDG team,¹² and others who have participated since the beginning: the conservator Luis Crespo¹³ from Spain and the conservator Florencia Gear¹⁴ from Argentina. The Latin stage aims to show the adaptation of the Japanese techniques in the Western heritage from their experience. The main topics of the course will be mentioned below to give the reader an idea of the content that is developed and shared.

¹² The teachers of the course that have been part of the TDG are Marie Vander Meeren, Patricia de la Garza Cabrera, Tania Estrada Valadez, Jennifer Ponce Fernández, and Ana Dalila Terrazas Santillán.

¹³ Luis Crespo is a conservator who works on the Biblioteca Nacional de España (National Library of Spain). He carries out conservation and restoration treatments of the collections of the Departments of Fine Arts and Cartography. He has work experience as a speaker and teacher of more than 30 years. His current professional work and teaching are focused on the diffusion of the aesthetics, ethic, tools, materials, and Japanese conservation techniques for their application to Western works and documents on paper. ATDG, Reseña curricular del seminario en línea: Experiencias y reflexiones del Curso internacional de conservación de papel en América Latina. Un encuentro con Oriente 2012-2019, 2020.

¹⁴ Florencia Gear is a conservator specialized in paper works. Since 2012, she collaborates with the Dirección Nacional de Bienes y Sitios Culturales of the Secretaría del Patrimonio Cultural, Ministerio de Cultura de la Nación (National Direction of Cultural Property and Sites of the Cultural Heritage Office, Ministry of Culture of the Nation). She is currently a member of the ICCROM Council in representation of Argentina. As a university teacher, she teaches subjects related to the cultural property techniques and preservation. ATDG, Reseña curricular del seminario en línea: Experiencias y reflexiones del Curso internacional de conservación de papel en América Latina. Un encuentro con Oriente 2012-2019, 2020.



In the Japanese stage, the topics have been defined by their coordinator under the consideration of their importance and application to the Western context. They cover an introductory part on the history of the conservation of the paper-based cultural property in Japan. As for the materials, they delve into those that are already useful for paper conservators, such as wheat starch¹⁵ and Japanese paper.¹⁶ Regarding tools, they focus on brushes,¹⁷ the *noribon*,¹⁸ the *norikoshi* or *suino*,¹⁹ the *hikkake*,²⁰ the bamboo spatulas, some knives,²¹ and the *karibari*.²² Regarding the treatment process, the lining and drying are noteworthy.²³



Figure 3. Lining practice during the Japanese stage, 2018 course edition.
Image: Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2018.

¹⁵ The Japanese teachers address the basic chemistry of wheat starch, the types of starch (*shin-nori* and *furu-nori*), cooking, preparation, dilution, application, and storage.

¹⁶ Japanese paper traditionally manufactured is called *washi*, it is usually a constituent material of the cultural property in Japan, as well as for its conservation. The course program includes basic information about the paper, its physical and chemical characteristics, the types, and identification of fibers (especially *kozo*, *mitzumata*, and *gampi*), manufacturing techniques, varieties, and uses.

¹⁷ Information about the manufacture, characteristics and caring of brushes is given. Especially on the following brushes: *nadebake* (smoothing brush), *shirobake* (spreading brush), *mizubake* (water brush), *kuisakibake* (water cut brush), *uchibake* (beating brush), *noribake* (paste brush).

¹⁸ The *noribon* (paste try) is a pan made of wood, it is used to knead and hold the paste during work.

¹⁹ The *norikoshi* or *suino* is a paste strainer to knead the cooked wheat starch and it usually has horsehair, silk, or synthetic weave, as required.

²⁰ The *hikkake* is bamboo that is used to lift the paper in the lining process.

²¹ Especially the *in-toh* (small and curved knife) and the *maruho-cho* (round knife). ATDG, Presentación "Herramientas para *soko*" de Nakamura Takahiro, Curso internacional de conservación de papel en América Latina. Un encuentro con Oriente, 2019.

²² The *karibari* is a structure composed by a reticulated stretcher, covered with several paper layers and an impermeabilized finishing with juice of persimmon. The *karibari* is used as support for the press-drying of works on paper. ATDG, Material de apoyo, Seminario en línea: Experiencias y reflexiones del Curso internacional de conservación de papel en América Latina. Un encuentro con Oriente 2012-2019, 2020, p. 46.

²³ In the drying process in Western techniques, the use of weight or press is common, while in Eastern techniques, press-drying and air drying are the most frequently used.

The Latin stage has three principal objectives that define the selection of the taught topics: first, to share the adaptation of techniques, materials, and Japanese tools in the conservation of Western heritage; second, to show alternatives to be adapted and accessible in their countries, and to reinforce the information on Western conservation materials, tools, and processes.

It is intended that the topics of the Latin stage have a direct relation with the Japanese stage and reinforce the knowledge in the practices and demonstrations by using Japanese materials, tools and techniques applied to Western paper samples, and alternatives are shared at the same time. The program includes an introductory part on the history, manufacture, and constitutive materials of Western paper. The subject of adhesives, cellulose ethers, type B gelatin, and, above all, wheat starch²⁴ is addressed. About conservation processes, capillarity cleaning, tear repairs, infills with paper and pulp, pre-coated Japanese tissue with different adhesives, linings, drying, flattening, and the manufacture of a bamboo spatula are considered.



Figure 4. Practice of lining in the Latin stage, 2018 course edition.
Image: Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2018.

During the course, a very enriching knowledge transmitted by the Japanese teachers and taken up by the Latin teachers is also shared. This is an attitude towards work, in which order prevails, the clarity of the sequence of steps for the processes to be carried out, the organization of the work area, the space and between people, concentration, cleanliness, good management, and use of the body, care of materials and tools, since tools are considered an extension of the body.

²⁴ The information about the chemistry of the wheat starch is reinforced, options for its cooking, extraction from wheat flour, preparation, dilution, applications, and storage are taught.



As mentioned, since one of the objectives of the course is that it is aimed at Spanish-speaking conservators,²⁵ especially in the Japanese stage, there is a Japanese-Spanish interpreter, this is convenient and useful for teachers and students. It has been very strenuous labor for the interpreters²⁶ because it demands prior preparation of the contents and specialized terminology. Besides, since the students come from different countries, there is a wide variety of terms that, although it is enriching for teachers and students, represents an additional effort for the interpreter.

The students

As mentioned above, the course is aimed at experienced paper conservators from Ibero-America to ensure the assimilation of the knowledge they will receive. Furthermore, it is also intended for them to be able to transmit, share, replicate and practice the learning acquired, either by the institution in which they are located, or by their functions, activities, or initiatives.

The number of expected students has varied in the seven editions of the course and has depended on the organization, space, and financial resources, but always with the interest of promoting a personalized dynamic to take advantage of the knowledge that is taught and practiced. From 9 to 12 students²⁷ have been accepted in each edition of the course, and in some, the attendance of listeners has been allowed.

It is important to point out that, in certain editions, some Japanese teachers have requested to stay during the Latin stage as students²⁸ to learn about the process of adapting techniques, materials, and tools to the Western heritage. This is also because the Japanese teachers have shown great interest in the work dynamics and in the Latin culture, which is very beneficial for the course and enriching for all participants and collaborators due to the feedback.

Before the course

The activities before the beginning of the course have required organization and coordination among those involved to ensure its success. It is a team effort that starts months in advance and is considered within the annual work schedule and budgets of both the CNCPC and TNRICP. Although the contents and dynamics of the course have not changed significantly from year to year, the intention to improve has always prevailed, so the workload has always been very strenuous.

About seven months in advance, the organizers agree on the dates and confirm the teachers' participation. The work on the preparation of the course increases gradually, first involving those members of the team with more experience until everyone is integrated. The distribution of tasks is because the commitments and responsibilities of the other TDG projects must also continue.

Organization and logistics

The course requires simultaneous work in several areas, which is why the direction of its coordinators is key. Marie Vander Meeren as general coordinator of the course is involved in all the activities and details with the vision of the result and the necessary steps to carry it out,

²⁵ The course was attended by students from Brazil, Portugal, and Belize, and a Spanish language proficiency certificate was required.

²⁶ The interpreters who participated in the course are mentioned at the end of the text.

²⁷ The precise number of students who participated in each edition is listed at the end of the text.

²⁸ The Japanese teachers that remained in the Latin stage were Masato Kato and Kyoko Kusunoki in 2012, Atsushi Ogasawara in 2013, and Kamon Kazuhiko and Hee Jae Won in 2016.





Figure 5. Yuki Watanabe. Interpreter on the 2012 and 2013 courses. *Image: Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2013.*



Figure 6. Saeko Yanagisawa. Interpreter on the 2014 to 2019 courses. *Image: Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2018.*





Figure 7. Japanese teachers Masato Kato and Kyoko Kusunoki at the Latin stage, 2012 course edition. *Image: Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2012.*



Figure 8. Japanese teacher Atsushi Ogasawara at the Latin stage, 2013 course edition. *Image: Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2013.*



Figure 9. Japanese teachers Kamon Kazuhiko and Hee Jae Won at the Latin stage, 2016 course edition. *Image: Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2016.*

in such a way that she promotes the strength of her team with the power to trust, delegate and push all the people that integrate the project, and through the designation of tasks according to their competences, responsibilities, and experience. The following is a list of the activities to be carried out:

- General logistics of the course
- Announcement and selection process
- Coordination and communication with foreign teachers
- Course contents
- Preparation of practices, demonstrations, and presentations
- Secondary activities related to the course
- Coordination and communication with students
- Schedule and logistics of course activities

Six months before the course starts...

Announcement

The announcement for the course is launched through ICCROM's website to receive applications from candidates. On this subject, the Subdirección de Cooperación Académica y Social para la Conservación²⁹ of the CNCPC also announces the website to promote its diffusion.

The general coordinator together with the ICCROM set the date for applications, it is usually opened six months in advance and closes about a month and a half later, since it is a period to make the necessary arrangements, planning, and preparations.

The application form includes personal data, academic background, publications and research work, language knowledge, professional activity, letter of intent, information on funding, and authorization from the applicant's institution.

Four months before the course starts...

Selection process

Once the applications are closed at ICCROM, an exhaustive exercise is carried out to analyze the information gathered from the applications. The selection process involves a part of the TDG team³⁰ to make a proposal of shortlisted candidates and a "waiting list" in which are the candidates for participation in case those selected can't attend for any reason. Then, the results are reviewed and approved by ICCROM and the Japanese team coordinator, Masato Kato.

²⁹ The Academic and Social Cooperation for Conservation Division is headed by Daniela Acevedo Carrión and is part of the Dirección de Educación Social para la Conservación (Social Education for Conservation Department) headed by Thalía Velasco Castelán.

³⁰ The team members that have participated in the TDG selection process are Marie Vander Meeren, Patricia de la Garza Cabrera, Tania Estrada Valadez, Ana Dalila Terrazas Santillán, and Laura Olivia Ibarra Carmona.



The selection process, initiated by TDG staff, has two stages: the first stage is the analysis of the data through a designed tool in Microsoft Excel (which is continuously updated to improve the process) that assigns a numeric value to the applicant's answers to obtain a score for each application. The second stage is the review of other team members, thus leading to a discussion to select the candidates.

There are some guidelines for those involved in the selection process, these are accepting a student per foreign country—a task that is often complicated since more than one outstanding application has been received from the same country—the students must perform activities directly related to paper conservation, and, in case of Mexican applicants, two students are selected per generation to benefit the institutions of our country and with the idea of contributing to the specialization of Mexican professionals and thus repay the support and resources from the INAH.³¹ Finally, it is perhaps relevant to add that students do not need to have experience in Japanese conservation techniques but showing interest in them is.

The selection process is usually carried out by those who have been involved in the course for the longest time and as mentioned above, at different times, to make the data analysis as objective as possible. For the TDG team, this is a motivating stage in the preparation of the course, since very interesting applications are received and the need to form a diverse group from different regions, backgrounds, and trajectories that reflect the situation of paper conservators in Ibero-America is considered. As each generation has passed, the participation of people from countries with lesser possibilities of specialization and from decentralized regions of countries that had already been selected in previous editions has been allowed.

Once the compliance response to the results is received, the list of students is published, and the applicants are notified through acceptance letters both to those selected as well as to the candidates on the "waiting list". A deadline is given to receive the response and confirmation from the students.

Three months before the course starts...

Preparations for receiving foreign students and teachers

With the confirmation of the students, continuous communication with them begins to be established, the general coordinator of the course is usually the one who takes care of every detail related to their attendance, permissions from their institutions, and all the doubts that may arise.

The expenses of lodging, food, materials, and tools needed to participate are covered by the course, however, students must pay for their transportation to Mexico City.

To carry out the course, strategic planning is necessary for the procedures and requests for resources and permissions for the contracting of lodging and food services,³² as well as the purchase of materials and tools.³³ As for the lodging of the Japanese team, their institute covers the expenses, which is a very significant contribution to the use of the project's resources. The

³¹ In 2012, 2016, and 2018, four Mexican students were accepted; it is worth mentioning that the students did not require lodging.

³² The course provides breakfast and lunch during it, and the students pay for their meals on weekends and dinners. Since the course attendees come from different parts of the world, a selection of food that can be to everyone's liking is sought.

³³ The course has had the valuable support of the Subdirección de Cooperación Académica y Social para la Conservación of the CNCPC in charge of Thalia Velasco Castelán during the 2013 to 2015 edition, and Daniela Acevedo Carrión in 2016, 2018, and 2019 editions, as well as the collaboration of Alejandra Aguirre in the accounting and resource verification part.



coordinator of the course manages the search, establishing the agreements, and contracting the provision of services. In the case of Iberoamerican teachers, they are accommodated in the same hotel as the students.

In advance, the general information about the arrival and stay in Mexico City is shared with all attendees.³⁴

Coordination and communication with foreign teachers

Marie Vander Meeren maintains direct communication with the foreign teachers. On one hand, she communicates with the Japanese team through Masato Kato³⁵ to know the members of the team, the dates and times of their arrival and departure from Mexico City, as well as everything relevant to their stay during the course. Since they prepare their presentations, demonstrations, and practices, the TDG team's support is focused on meeting the requirements of materials, tools, equipment, and space arrangement.

On the other hand, there is a different dynamic with the foreign teachers of the Latin stage, Luis Crespo and Florencia Gear, as they are involved in the proposals or modifications in each edition. The TDG team first works with them remotely through e-mail exchanges where the work, materials, tools, and forms of their activities are usually defined. Once they arrive, they join the team to coordinate and prepare what is necessary, and they usually bring with them materials to be included in their demonstrations and practices, which broadens the diversity of possibilities given to the students.

Two months before the course starts...

Preparations of course contents

Regarding the Latin stage, the following is a list of the several phases for the development of the course content:

- Evaluation
- Updating
- Experimentation
- Planning
- Preparation of the presentations
- Preparation of the materials, tools, and space

Evaluation and updating of content

Although the course program has not changed significantly during all the editions, a template has not been reproduced since the organizers and teachers have always sought to improve the management

³⁴ Advice on airport-hotel transportation, currency exchange, information about the accommodation, the CNCPC, modes of transportation, as well as general indications about the dynamics of the course and some recommendations for health, security, and tourism are provided.

³⁵ The teachers of the Japanese team have changed during the different editions of the course, they are mentioned at the end of the text.



of time and to search for exercises or practices that lead to reflection in the students. Each year before the course, the content is reviewed based on a self-evaluation exercise and the final surveys from the students of previous editions. Likewise, the subjects and the bibliography are updated.

Experimentation on the contents

Presentations, practices, and demonstrations are proposed as a result of the evaluation and updating of the course contents exercises. In this stage, and especially in the practices, the exercises and their variables are replicated with the materials, the tools, and the selection of the taste tubes that the students will use to modify or continue with what has been established. Behind this material there is a lot of preparation to foresee all the details, so that it is didactic, practical, representative, and useful.

The whole TDG team is usually involved in the experimentation, as well as in the discussion and decision making. Furthermore, the material resulting from the experimentation is kept and organized for the course record.

One month before the course starts...

Preparations for demonstrations and practices

Based on the results and conclusions of the experimentation stage, a schedule of activities and work plan is designed for the preparation of materials and tools necessary for demonstrations and practices. Since it is a stage of simultaneous tasks, the team establishes a dynamic based on communication and organization. Details on the mentioned tasks are described below.

Each student is provided with a set of tools to be used during the course, it should be noted that some tools are specific to the Japanese stage and others to the Latin stage. A folder with the Japanese presentations of the course is organized and, in recent times, supporting material consisting of a summary of each subject of the Latin stage. The students are provided with stationery material for taking notes, a USB with the bibliography that can complement the information given by the teachers, and sample books with the materials and Japanese papers used during the practices.

The kits are prepared for each practice and demonstration for the students, and teachers, and are to be attached to a record folder of the material prepared each year. In the case of demonstrations, variants of the students' exercises are usually included, or relevant results of the exercises during the experimentation, to share reflections and complementary information.

On the other hand, all the prepared material is duly marked and organized on a shelf, as well as the tools that will be used for specific practices and that are not included in the personal kit.

Space arrangement

Since the course is held at the CNCPC's TDG, it is necessary to adapt the space by safeguarding the works in progress, modifying the layout of the studio furniture, undertaking a thorough cleaning, and installing curtains for the projection of the presentations.³⁶

³⁶ This task has been supported by the CNCPC's Área de Servicios Administrativos, Mantenimiento y Limpieza (Administrative Services, Maintenance and Cleaning Area).





Figure 10. Taller de Documento Gráficos at the beginning of the course.
Image: Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2015.

Visual identity

The visual identity of the course has been mainly in charge of the restorer Patricia de la Garza Cabrera, who is also a graphic designer and is part of the TDG team. She also supervises and coordinates the preparation of badges, folders, certificates, covers, institutional divider lines, and nameplates, with the support of the Área de Comunicación y Enlace.³⁷

Opening ceremony

The Subdirección de Cooperación Académica y Social para la Conservación helps the TDG team with the opening ceremony by asking for the auditorium and decorating it, summoning the invited authorities and the CNCPC community, reviewing the protocol and logistics of the event, as well as the space for the coexistence after the ceremony, and acting as an intermediary with the Área de Comunicación y Enlace to cover the event with photographic and video recordings.

One week before the course starts...

Logistics and schedule of course activities

One week before the course begins, the logistics are finalized, detailing each activity, and designating a person in charge and her rotation during the event. In general, the activities are helping and supporting the foreign teachers, photo, and video recording of the course,³⁸ follow-

³⁷ The contribution of designer Gabriela Gómez Llorente to the visual identity of the course is acknowledged. The Área de Comunicación y Enlace (Communication and Liaison Area) is headed by María Eugenia Rivera Pérez.

³⁸ For the photographic and video recording, a protocol has been designed for the different activities of the course to have representative and useful shots for different purposes (documentation, diffusion). This tool is being continuously improved.



up of the course program to assign the materials, tools, and equipment necessary for the demonstrations and practices, support for the presentations and their projection, and, finally, preparations for the recess.

The beginning of the course is approaching, the workday activities are increasing in time, precision, effort, and concentration. All the members of the TDG team take decisions together, they are integrated and involved, which reaffirms their commitment and goals.

Preparations for welcoming the students

The general coordinator makes sure to have confirmation of the students' arrival, who usually arrive at the city one or two days in advance. In addition, the CNCPC Administration supports a mode of transportation to pick up and return the students to their lodging.

Three days before the course starts...

Reception of Japanese teachers

The arrival of the Japanese teachers is arranged three days before the start of the course, they go to the workshop to prepare everything necessary and coordinate with the TDG team. They receive a warm and long-awaited welcome, and they meet the new teachers who have changed in the different editions. The advance arrival is necessary for them to get used to the conditions in Mexico City due to the altitude and time zone.

Japanese teachers make a great contribution to didactic material as a result of the time and commitment they dedicate to the preparation, organization, and planning before the course. All the material is used by teachers and students.

The course starts

The course begins with the opening ceremony with the participation of authorities from the CNCPC, INAH, TNRICP, and ICCROM. It is a meeting of cultural diversity, the CNCPC promotes projects aimed at the specialization and training of professionals in cultural heritage conservation.

On the first day, there is a dynamic of introduction between students and teachers, there is time for each student to introduce themselves, so everyone gets to know their background, institution, and country. There is also a tour around the CNCPC facilities, and the students answer an initial survey about their expectations of the course.³⁹

The Japanese stage begins

The first part of the course is the Japanese stage in which the teachers share their traditional paper conservation techniques. In the dynamics of the course, it is very appropriate to start with the Japanese teachers not only because they know the information firsthand from the specialists, but also because of their way and precision of working and sharing, thus creating an organized environment, which we try to preserve during the rest of the course. In addition, they show deep respect for conservation along with a commitment that may be new to some attendees.

³⁹ The recent version of the initial survey "Sondeo de expectativas" was developed with the help of Mariana Pascual Cáceres from the CNCPC's Programa de educación (Education Program) to have a tool that compares the results obtained at the end of the course.



The team is complete in only one day

The foreign teachers of the Latin stage, Florencia Gear and Luis Crespo, arrive practically at the end of the first stage, and the Japanese teachers return to their country the next day after concluding their participation. For the teachers of both stages, combining their participation in the course and their activities and responsibilities is a great effort, both because of the distance and the time required before and during the course. It is worth mentioning that sometimes they spend their free days participating in the course. That is why there is only one day in the middle of the course when the team is complete, and that day there is an atmosphere of closure, harmony, and interchange.



Figure 11. Japanese stage and Latin stage team at the 2018 course edition.
Image: Graphic Documents Workshop, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2018.

Despite the time lag of the arrival of the Latin stage teachers, there has always been an almost immediate interaction with the students and, although time is short, bonds are easily forged; perhaps it is accurate that they are hosted at the same place, or perhaps it is due to the mutual interest that brings them together.

The Latin stage

As already mentioned, during this stage an attempt is made to extrapolate the knowledge learned to the Western context, the experience that the teachers have had in this journey of understanding, and adapting Japanese techniques greatly enriches the course, thus giving rise to self-evaluation of each process, practices, and results, as well as sharing the path that leads them to explore how to take advantage of the information in a continuous learning process.

Other activities during the course

During the course editions, visits to places of interest to students and national heritage sites have been considered, some within the program and others outside of it. Some of the visits that were made in different editions were to the Biblioteca Nacional de México (BNM),⁴⁰ to the Archivo General de la Nación (AGN),⁴¹ to the Escuela Nacional de Conservación, Restauración y

⁴⁰ National Library of Mexico (note from the translator).

⁴¹ General Archive of the Nation (note from the translator).



Museografía “Manuel del Castillo Negrete” (ENCRyM),⁴² to the Biblioteca Palafoxiana,⁴³ to San Pablito Pahuatlán in the Sierra de Puebla where amate paper is manufactured, as well as to the Museo de las Culturas,⁴⁴ to the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia,⁴⁵ to the Museo Nacional del Virreinato,⁴⁶ and to the Cholula archaeological site. These visits are an opportunity to share the cultural diversity of our country, show the depositories of the documentary heritage, and reinforce the dynamics of interaction among all participants.

After the course

At the end of the course, the work for the TDG team has not finished yet. The tools and materials that were used are carefully stored, with the help of an inventory help us to identify what was used, because experience has taught us that the way to organize them will be very advantageous for the next year.

Furthermore, the digital material collected from the photo and video recordings is classified in folders and backed up. The space and furniture distribution are reorganized. A physical folder is made up of the material used in each practice, an activity that year after year is done with more detail and care, and the results of the experimentation stage and the record of the course practices are also included.

Finally, a very important task is the creation of record cards for each activity of the course. This idea arose from the need to cover a large amount of precise information that each practice requires with a precise time of anticipation. Since the beginning of the course, a detailed record was kept, but in 2014 we began to organize it into record cards for easy reference and to homogenize the information. The data contained in the record cards are the subject of the activity, whether it is an individual or group activity, estimated time, name of the teacher, objective, list of materials and tools, preparations to be made, dynamics, and summary of the activity, observations to be considered on the photographic record, and the actual time during the course. Thus, it becomes a procedure guideline, it has been a key tool for the organization of the work, and it is printed and kept in the materials folder.

Internship at the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties

As a result of the course, Dr. Masato Kato invited members of the TDG team to TNRI in Japan in different years. These internships lasted about four months and were aimed to continue sharing traditional paper conservation techniques. These have been invaluable experiences for the invited conservators⁴⁷ because it is an opportunity to observe the context where these techniques are performed, hence concluding that there is much to learn from the Japanese teachers in the field of conservation. For example, Japanese learning dynamics are different from the Western one: once they have completed their training, they achieve the apprentice rank and keep it for ten years, until they become masters through observation, repetition, organization, and discipline, which has repercussions on the actions aimed at heritage conservation. The efforts and generosity of

⁴² National School of Conservation, Restoration and Museography (note from the translator).

⁴³ Palafoxiana Library (note from the translator).

⁴⁴ National Museum of Cultures (note from the translator).

⁴⁵ National Museum of Anthropology (note from the translator).

⁴⁶ National Museum of the Viceroyalty of New Spain (note from the translator).

⁴⁷ The invited conservators were Patricia de la Garza Cabrera in 2013, Tania Estrada Valadez in 2014, Jeniffer Ponce Fernández in 2015, and Ana Dalila Terrazas Santillán in 2016.



Masato Kato and the TNRICP in creating these opportunities are acknowledged and appreciated. Undoubtedly, the experience in Japan reinforces, enriches, and encourages the TDG team to continue a learning path and promote the conservation not only of heritage, but also its techniques, tools, materials, and everything intangible around them as a cultural legacy for humanity.

Events that changed the direction of the course

2017

Five editions of the course concluded in 2016 and, as proposed at the beginning, in 2017 an evaluation seminar would be held in its place to promote feedback among former students of all generations and teachers and to know the extent of the learning acquired, application, and results.

The seminar would have several parts: a general evaluation, collecting information about the former student's development in specific cases, retrieving testimonies in an audiovisual format, conducting a self-evaluation among teachers, and promoting the diffusion of the results.

The preparation for the seminar began months in advance. The first step was to design and send a survey via Google Forms to the former students to obtain an overview of the scope of the topics learned during the course in their work in paper conservation. During this stage, a very satisfactory response was achieved from all former students, and qualitative and quantitative information was collected.⁴⁸

For the second step, a series of worksheets with guiding questions were designed to learn in detail about activities that they developed concerning the course content and that they would like to share during the evaluation seminar. Former students were given the option of participating in one or more categories: training, case study, tool adaptation, experimentation, course, article (academic or for general public). The responses were evaluated, the most representative ones were selected, and the former students were invited to attend the CNCPC again in October of that year.

However, the 2017 México earthquakes hanged the course of the project. The organizers agreed to suspend activities and expend their economic and human resources to attend to the damaged heritage, so the TDG team joined the brigades from the states of Chiapas, Puebla, and Oaxaca.

In 2018, to continue with the first stage of evaluation, the information collected was organized and analyzed, it was a very important task since it yielded concrete data on the assimilation of the topics taught, their application, as well as the development and trajectory of the course. The results of the evaluation were shared with the foreign teachers and a meeting was held at the CNCPC facilities between the TDG team, along with the Japanese coordinator Masato Kato, Makiha Gokita and Hee Jae Won in February 2018, when the commitment to continue the course in Mexico was also agreed upon.

Another of the activities was to invite former students and teachers to participate in the creation of audiovisual testimonies to compile a remembrance. A video was made and shown at the inauguration of the 2018 course.

⁴⁸ Mariana Pascual from the CNCPC'S Programa de educación (Education Program), and Paulina Ruíz from the CNCPC's Área de Programación y Análisis (Programming and Analysis Area) helped with the design of the survey and the analysis of the results.



2019

In 2019 two circumstances modified the course, on one hand, the end of the LATAM program of ICCROM, which in any case did not cease to provide support for holding the course. On the other hand, a situation that impacted the development of the course was a reduction in INAH's budget and financial resources, which resulted in the need to rearrange the program and the dynamics of the course to continue organizing it.

The modifications were made in the Latin stage, so it was necessary to carry out an exhaustive analysis of the content and dynamics of the course. As a means to restructure the program, the following considerations were taken as a starting point:

- Give priority to activities that are directly related to the adaptation of Japanese techniques, materials, and tools for the heritage of paper conservation in the West.
- Keep designated times for discussion, evaluation of results, and feedback.
- Preserve as much content as possible but simplify practices, either by eliminating variables or by working in teams.
- For the practices, it was proposed to focus on the most viable, accessible, or ideal options for application, and to use the demonstrations to complement information on variables.

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion of the course program and content, complementary activities were eliminated, such as visits to libraries, archives, and museums, as well as the first day session where each student introduced themselves. The initial number of nine students was reestablished since eleven students were accepted in the two previous editions. Finally, and very unfortunate for the whole team, it was possible to invite only one foreign teacher for the Latin stage.

Despite the reduced time, the results were very favorable, according to the students' evaluations and feedback from teachers and organizers. In the final survey, the students were asked about how they assessed the duration of the course, 80 % chose the option "adequate", which allowed us to confirm that their perception of time was related more to the organization and logistics of the activities so that they had enough time to carry the activities out, although the students had no point of comparison, it was one of the highest percentages of the seven editions.⁴⁹

Despite the extraneous circumstances that gave rise to these modifications, many of them were considered for subsequent editions.

2020

At the beginning of 2020, the project for the eighth edition of the course was set, however, due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, the organizers agreed to cancel the project for that year. Instead, several activities were undertaken around the course: collaborating in the international cooperation section of the CNCPC website⁵⁰ to develop the course section to promote its diffusion and feedback, publishing an article in the *CR. Conservación y Restauración* journal in a special edition dedicated to the work developed during the pandemic, and defining the proposal for the creation of this issue dedicated to the course.

⁴⁹ According to the analysis of the final evaluations undertaken in 2020, the percentages in each edition that considered the course time "adequate", "sufficient" or "correct" were: 33 % in 2012; 66 % in 2013; 89 % in 2014; 50 % in 2015; 90 % in 2016; and 27 % in 2018.

⁵⁰ Undertaken by the CNCPC's Subdirección de Cooperación Académica y Social para la Conservación (Academic and Social Cooperation for Conservation Division).



Finally, the online seminar: *Experiencias y reflexiones del Curso internacional de conservación de papel en América Latina. Un encuentro con Oriente 2012–2019*⁵¹ was held from December 4 to 11, 2020, with the collaboration of the Japanese team represented by Masato Kato, the foreign teachers of the Latin stage, Luis Crespo and Florencia Gear, and a team from ICCROM,⁵² who were key in the organization, management, logistics, and technical support of the platform to carry the seminar out.

The webinar had two objectives, on one hand, to promote a space for former students to share their experiences, for which the stages completed in 2017 of the evaluation seminar were very useful. On the other hand, to prepare refresher subjects on the course content and to open the space to address doubts and share conclusions. 38 former students from 11 countries participated as panelists in the eight thematic tables⁵³ that formed the “experiences” section. For the “updating” stage, a preliminary survey was carried out to identify the most recurring subjects,⁵⁴ or those that had changed over the editions. Based on the results answered by the former students, presentations were prepared and support material consisting of a compendium of updated information and a glossary of Japanese terms was prepared and shared after the end of the seminar.

Before the webinar, there was a different preparation than what the organizers used to do, as it required the use of new ways and dynamics of remote work. The work done by the former students of different generations in preparing a joint presentation for the thematic tables is acknowledged since it involved a great deal of work on their part, integrating and finding points of coincidence by evaluating the possibilities that each one contributed to generate new conclusions. Somehow, that exchange of experiences was visualized among the organizers at the 2017 evaluation seminar, but it was much more enriching given that everyone who wanted to share their experience was allowed to participate.

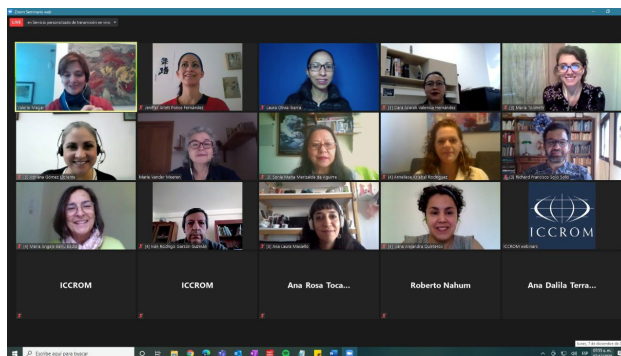


Figure 12. 2020 webinar session.
Image: Valerie Magar, 2020.

A mention of the course collaborators

It has been a 10-year journey since the 2011 seminar, each course edition has had its peculiarities as there has been a continuous transformation for the improvement of learning. The following is a mention of the collaborators of the course editions and webinar:

⁵¹ “Experiences and reflections on the International Course Course on Paper Conservation in Latin America: Meeting East 2012-2019”

⁵² The ICCROM team in Rome that collaborated on the webinar is mentioned on page 20.

⁵³ The thematic tables were 1) Adaptation and application of Japanese materials, tools, and techniques; 2) Cleaning techniques; 3) Courses, diffusion, training; 4) Teaching; 5) Adhesives; 6) Reagents, tear repairs, infills; 7) Lining; 8) Flattening.

⁵⁴ The updating stage focused on the following subjects: starch, other adhesives (cellulose ethers, type B gelatin), Japanese papers, capillary cleaning, linings, drying, flattening, and *funari*.



October 17 to 30, 2012		
Nobuo Kamei, TNRICP director	Alfonso de Maria y Campos, INAH director Lilia Rivero Weber CNCPC coordinator	Stefano De Caro, ICCROM director
Japanese team: Masato Kato, Ikeda Kazuhiko, Kyoko Kusunoki Interpreter: Yuki Watanabe	Latin team: Marie Vander Meeren, Luis Crespo, Florencia Gear, Patricia de la Garza, Tania Estrada, Paulina García, Carina Cruz, Thalia Velasco, Germán Fraustro, Natalia Barberá, Alejandra Quintanar	Number of students: 11 Countries: Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, México, Perú, Venezuela
November 6 to 22, 2013		
Nobuo Kamei, TNRICP director	María Teresa Franco, INAH director Valerie Magar, CNCPC coordinator	Stefano De Caro, ICCROM director
Japanese team: Masato Kato, Atsushi Ogasawara, Kyoko Kusunoki Interpreter: Yuki Watanabe	Latin team: Marie Vander Meeren, Luis Crespo, Florencia Gear, Patricia de la Garza, Tania Estrada, Carina Cruz, Jeniffer Ponce, Ana Dalila Terrazas	Number of students: 9 Countries: Argentina, Brasil, Ecuador, España, México, Perú, Puerto Rico, Uruguay
November 5 to 21, 2014		
Nobuo Kamei, TNRICP director	María Teresa Franco, INAH director Valerie Magar, CNCPC coordinator	Stefano De Caro, ICCROM director
Japanese team: Masato Kato, Atsushi Ogasawara, Kyoko Kusunoki Interpreter: Saeko Yanagisawa	Latin team: Marie Vander Meeren, Luis Crespo, Florencia Gear, Patricia de la Garza Jeniffer Ponce, Ana Dalila Terrazas, Laura Olivia Ibarra	Number of students: 9 Countries: Argentina, Brasil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, España, México, Perú
November 4 to 20, 2015		
Nobuo Kamei, TNRICP director	María Teresa Franco, INAH director Valerie Magar, CNCPC coordinator	Stefano De Caro, ICCROM director
Japanese team: Masato Kato, Kamon Kazuhiko, Kyoko Kusunoki, Hee Jae Won, Momoko Oda Interpreter: Saeko Yanagisawa	Latin team: Marie Vander Meeren, Luis Crespo, Florencia Gear, Patricia de la Garza, Jeniffer Ponce, Ana Dalila Terrazas, Olivia Ibarra	Number of students: 9 Countries: Belice, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, México, Portugal, Uruguay, Venezuela

November 9 to 25, 2016		
Nobuo Kamei, TNRICP director	María Teresa Franco, INAH director Liliana Giorguli, CNCPC coordinator	Stefano De Caro, ICCROM director
Japanese team: Masato Kato, Kamon Kazuhiko, Hee Jae Won, Momoko Oda Interpreter: Saeko Yanagisawa	Latin team: Marie Vander Meeren, Luis Crespo, Florencia Gear, Tania Estrada, Patricia de la Garza, Ana Dalila Terrazas, Ariadna Rodríguez	Number of students: 11 Countries: Argentina, Brasil, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, México, Paraguay, Perú
May 28 to June 13, 2018		
Saito Takamasa, TNRICP director	Diego Prieto, INAH director María del Carmen Castro, CNCPC coordinator	Webber Nodoro, ICCROM director
Japanese team: Masato Kato, Takahiro Nakamura, Hee Jae Won, Makiha Gokita Interpreter: Saeko Yanagisawa	Latin team: Marie Vander Meeren, Luis Crespo, Florencia Gear, Tania Estrada, Patricia de la Garza, Ana Dalila Terrazas, Ariadna Rodríguez, Ana Rosa Toca	Number of students: 11 Countries: Argentina, Brasil, Colombia, Cuba, España, México, Paraguay, Perú
October 30 to November 13, 2019		
Saito Takamasa, TNRICP director	Diego Prieto, INAH director María del Carmen Castro, CNCPC coordinator	Webber Nodoro, ICCROM director
Japanese team: Takahiro Nakamura, Sugiyama Keisuke, Yotsumoto Hiroki, Makiha Gokita Interpreter: Saeko Yanagisawa	Latin team: Marie Vander Meeren, Luis Crespo, Tania Estrada, Patricia de la Garza, Ana Dalila Terrazas, Ariadna Rodríguez, Ana Rosa Toca, Jeniffer Ponce	Number of students: 9 Countries: Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, España, México, Perú, Venezuela



Diciembre 4 to 11 2020		
Saito Takamasa, TNRICP director	Diego Prieto, INAH director María del Carmen Castro, CNCPC coordinator	Webber Ndoro, ICCROM director
Colaboration: Masato Kato, Makiha Gokita, Marie Vander Meeren, Luis Crespo, Florencia Gear, Tania Estrada, Ana Dalila Terrazas, Ariadna Rodríguez, Ana Rosa Toca, Jeniffer Ponce, Laura Olivia Ibarra	Number of former students: 39 Countries: Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, España, México, Paraguay, Perú, Venezuela	ICCROM team: Valerie Magar, Elisa Ortiz, Alice Iemali, Roberto Nahum y Marco Carra.



Figura 13. 2012-2019 Japanese and Latin teams.
 Image: Taller de Documentos Gráficos, ©CNCPC-INAH, 2020.



Conclusions

The record of the work of all those involved before, during, and after the course has a sense of continuity because it is in a constant change process, sometimes due to team members, teachers, directors, or other events, hence the relevance of mentioning the effort of organization and collaboration until today, as a testimony and part of its history. It is also an attempt to acknowledge the coordinators and visionaries of the course as promoters of specialization and exchange among professionals and the ongoing cooperation of CNCPC, TNRICP, and ICCROM.

The first five years of the course ran smoothly, since 2017 there have been events that changed the plan, it has required exploring new ways of working in a continuous teaching-learning process.

During the seven editions of the course, a solid community has been forged, and it is up to all of us to protect it, thus providing an opportunity to strengthen ties between professionals, institutions, and countries, where language, different ideologies, and cultural diversity are part of our strengths. This is a platform for integrating new formats, sharing the results, and enriching and updating our learning.

In 2021, strategies and sanitary measures continue due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, the organizers of the course are still interested, involved, and communicated for its continuity, however, this year for prevention and everyone's safety, the course will not be held. This situation leads to considering the use of digital media, platforms, and technology for the transmission and diffusion of knowledge.

*

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Archivo del Taller de Documentos Gráficos (ATDG), Coordinación Nacional de Conservación del Patrimonio Cultural, Ciudad de México, México.

