

Newsletter No. 57 (January 2011)

"Collecting Asia: East Asian Libraries in North America, 1868-2008"

Raymond Lum

**Librarian for Western Languages
Harvard-Yenching Library, Harvard University**

Collecting Asia: East Asian Libraries in North America, 1868-2008. Ed. by Peter X. Zhou.
(Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, Inc., 2010; *Asia Past & Present: New
Research From AAS*, no. 4). xxi, 342 pp. ISBN 978-0-924304-56-9



Photo: courtesy of Association for Asian Studies

For over 140 years, so far, publications originating in East Asia have been assembled in libraries in the U.S. and Canada in ways that until fairly recently were independent of one another. Early catalog-card distribution by the U. S. Library of Congress, along with printed library catalogs, did allow for the distribution of information about publications and library holdings. But until the internet drastically altered how information was created and shared, academic libraries developed nearly autonomously, relying heavily on publishers, faculty, and graduate students to alert librarians to lacunae in their collections. Libraries still do that to some extent, but accepting libraries as stand-alone institutions within larger institutions is obsolete thinking.

And yet, all collections are unique in the ways they were developed, in the stories of the people who built them, and in their idiosyncrasies. All of that is recorded in this volume and is

Newsletter No. 57 (January 2011)

supplemented by copious notes and bibliographies and many visual images of texts, libraries, and the personalities, some quite unusual, who have had lasting influences on the libraries that no doubt also had lasting influences on them.

The genesis of this collection of essays on the histories of the 25 oldest East Asian libraries in North America is explained by the editor in his preface:

The idea of publishing a volume on the history of East Asian collections in the United States and Canada over the past 140 years came about in October 2007, when the head of more than twenty East Asian libraries met at the University of California, Berkeley, for a two-day symposium on the topic. The event coincided with the dedication of the university's newly completed C. V. Starr East Asian Library and Chang-Lin Tien Center for East Asian Studies, the first library building ever constructed in North America specifically to house an East Asian collection. [p. xi]

The historical essays in this volume are presented in the chronological order in which the East Asian collections are considered to have been established, although real dates of "founding" might be open to interpretation.

One of the delights that the editor and the designers created is a whole page image, opposite the dedication statement, of photos of some of the librarians who were instrumental in founding or expanding individual collections, librarians such as Gussie Gaskill (Cornell), Kaiming Chiu and Eugene Wu (Harvard-Yenching), Naomi Fukuda (Michigan), Elizabeth Huff (California-Berkeley), T. H. Tsien (Chicago), Mary Wright (Hoover Institution, Stanford), Kan'ichi Asakawa (Yale) and other iconic figures who led the development of major collections.

A chronology of the development of the twenty-five East Asian collections highlighted in this collection precedes the text, as does a timeline of East Asian history. Appendix A lists major East Asian Collections in North American institutions in alphabetical order with information on the size of their holdings as of June 2008; and a ranking list, by size of collections, of those libraries. Appendix B lists the acquisitions budgets of each of the collections. The book, which is indexed, is available from the Association for Asian Studies (www.asian-studies.org). The chapter titles and the text authors are listed below.

A History of the East Asia Library at Yale University, by Ellen Hammond

A History of the East Asian Collections in the Library of Congress, by Hwa-wei Lee

East Meets East: The Harvard-Yenching Library, by Raymond Lum

Newsletter No. 57 (January 2011)

The McCartee Library and the East Asian Collection of the University of Pennsylvania,
by Jidong Yang

At the Crossroads Between East and West: The C. V. Starr East Asian Library at the
University of California, Berkeley, by Peter X. Zhou

A Better Understanding: The C. V. Starr East Asian Library at Columbia University, by
Amy Heinrich

The Wason Collection on East Asia: A Resonance of Cornell University's Motto, by
Liren Zheng

A History of the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Collections of the University of Hawai'i
at Manoa, by Allen J. Riedy in collaboration with Tokiko Y. Bazzell, Kuang-tien Yao, and Daniel
C. Kane

The East Asia Library and the Gest Collection at Princeton University, by Martin J.
Heijdra

The Ever Beckoning Horizon: The East Asia Collection at the University of Toronto, by
Anna Liang U

Berthold Laufer, The Newberry Library, and the University of Chicago's East Asian
Library, by Yuan Zhou

Vista and Vision: The East Asia Library of the University of Washington, by Zhijia Shen

Growing Amid Challenges: Stanford University's East Asia Library, by Dongfang Shao
in collaboration with Qi Qiu

Sixty Years of the East Asian Collections at the University of California, Los Angeles,
by Amy Tsiang

The Asia Library of the University of Michigan, by Jidong Yang in collaboration with
Jessie L. Mannisto

The East Asian Collection at Indiana University, by Wen-ling Liu

The Establishment and Development of the East Asian Library at the University of
Minnesota, by Su Chen

Building an Academic Library in the Heart of Pacific Canada: The Asian Library at the
University of British Columbia, by Eleanor Yuen

Fifty Years of the East Asian Collection at the University of Kansas, by Vickie Fu Doll

Global Resource Sharing and Information Services the East Asian Library at the
University of Pittsburg, by Hong Xu

A Legacy of Value to Sustain and Uphold: The East Asian Collection at the Ohio State
University, by Maureen H. Donovan

The East Asian Collection of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, by His-chu
Bolick

Newsletter No. 57 (January 2011)

Treasures in the Cornfield: The East Asian Collection of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, by Karen T. Wei

The East Asian Collection at Duke University: Dynamics of Change, by Kristina Kade Troost

Past, Present, and Future of the East Asia Collection at the University of California, San Diego, by Jim Cheng.

Raymond Lum is Librarian for Western Languages, Harvard-Yenching Library, Harvard University.