

# COLLECTION OVERVIEWS

## CHINESE STUDIES

### I. SCOPE

This overview covers the Library's collection of materials relating to the study of China. The Chinese Team of the Asian Division has custody of most of the Chinese-language materials; Western language materials about China are in the general collections. Supportive research materials can be found in special format divisions: Geography and Map Division; Prints and Photographs Division; and Manuscripts Division. Legal materials are in the custody of the Law Library's Far Eastern Law Division.

The Chinese collection began in 1869, when the Library of Congress received 10 works in 933 volumes of Chinese books from China's Emperor Tongzhi. By 1912, the collection grew to 16,900 volumes, through acquisitions of notable collections such as the Caleb Cushing Collection of 2,500 volumes and the Rockhill Collection of 6,000 volumes. In 1928, the Division of Chinese Literature was established in the Library. Dr. Walter T. Swingle, an expert in the Department of Agriculture, purchased tens of thousands of Chinese books during his several plant-collecting trips in East Asia in the early years of the Division. Throughout the next several decades, the collection was increased by acquisitions of private collections, gifts, and purchases. In 1945, 5,000 volumes were purchased in Chungking (Chongqing) for the Library by the U.S. Government Interdepartmental Committee for the Acquisition of Foreign Publications. In 1951, the collection had holdings of 280,682; and by 1975 the collection had reached a size of 411,963 volumes.

Following President Nixon's visit to the People's Republic of China in 1972, contacts were re-established with libraries and distribution agencies in China, resulting in substantial acquisitions through exchange and direct purchase. Since that time, materials are purchased through blanket-order dealers in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan; additions are also received through gifts and through exchange with major libraries and scholarly institutions.

### II. SIZE

The Library's Chinese Collection consists of 1,005,623 volumes of monographs (a total based on the ILS holdings of mid-2008). It is the largest and most accessible repository of Chinese language materials outside of China. The Collection holds more than 12,000 periodical titles. The newspaper holdings date from the 1870's to the present, numbering about 1,200 titles; some of these are available in hard copy and others on microform. Important Chinese-language newspapers, published in various parts of the world are microfilmed on a continuing basis. There are approximately 200,000 books in the General Collections relating to China.

The Chinese Team receives an average of 12,000 monographs and 2,500 current serial titles annually. Current serial titles cover major academic journals, magazines and government reports of China (including Hong Kong and Macau) and Taiwan.

The Chinese Collection has extensive and noteworthy holdings of microfilm materials, including over 600 monograph entries, 400 periodicals and 150 newspapers in approximately 16,000 reels/sheets. The monograph holdings include more than 2,800 titles of rare works. A feature of the periodical holdings, for example, is the entire 44 volume run of *Tung Fang Tsa Chih* (Eastern Miscellany), published in Shanghai between 1904 and 1948.

#### Selected Statistics on Cataloged Chinese-language Collections \*

Religion, philosophy (Class B-BX)	17,281
Early history (DS701 - DS757)	20,220#
Modern history (DS757 -DS779)	20,070#
Economics (Class H)	43,876
Language and literature (Class PL)	68,822
Oversize fine arts, including folios (Class N-NX))	15,447

\* Note: figures are estimates, and do not include pre-twentieth century publications.

# These two figures are taken from the 1993 overview, as the new figures are even smaller than these.

### III. GENERAL RESEARCH STRENGTHS

The Chinese-language collection covers virtually all subjects of value to scholarship. Overall, the collection is comprised of 40% in the humanities, 40% in the social sciences, and 20% in general works, science and technology, bibliography, etc.

In addition to the largest and most comprehensive collection of Chinese-language materials on China in the Western Hemisphere, the Library also has a rich collection of China-related materials in English, German, French, Russian, Japanese, Korean and other languages. For special format materials, the Library has rare, old Chinese maps in the Geography and Map Division; many unique and rare Chinese photographs and fine prints in the Prints and Photographs Division; missionary papers, trading house papers, personal diplomatic and military papers in the Manuscript Division.

Traditionally, fields such as history, local descriptions, government, philosophy and literature are emphasized. In recent years, a generous grant from Luce Foundation made possible phenomenal growth of much-needed materials on contemporary Chinese politics, CCP history, foreign affairs, military, economics, business, finance, and social conditions. The Division also has plans to further develop its holdings on China

missionaries, theater and drama, film, music, ethnic studies, and selected scientific disciplines such as environmental protection, water resources, and seismological studies.

#### **IV. AREAS OF DISTINCTION**

The Chinese Collection is especially rich in rare items, pre-modern local gazetteers, collectanea, collected writings of individual authors, and current works on history, literature, and social sciences. The collections described below form the core of the Division's rarities that attracts large numbers of scholars paying pilgrimage to the Library each year to use them. But further development of these collections is technically infeasible and financially unrealistic; hence they can be regarded as stable collections.

- **Chinese Rare Book Collection:** approximately 4,000 titles. The rare book catalog compiled by Wang Chung-min (Wang Zhongmin) and published in 1957 describes 1,777 works featuring 11 Song (960-1279 C.E.), 1 Jin (1115-1234), 14 Yuan (1270-1368), 1,518 Ming (1368-1644), and 70 early Qing period (1644-1795) imprints; plus 140 manuscripts and 23 miscellaneous items. However, with the relaxation of the criteria for rare books and the backlog of un-cataloged old materials gradually processed, the rare book volume count will at least double that in the Wang Zhongmin catalog.
- **Chinese Local Gazetteers:** 4,000 titles in 60,000 volumes. According to the 1942 catalog compiled by Chu Shih Chia (Zhu Shijia), the strength of Chinese local gazetteers was next to only one library in China, and holdings are especially strong on provinces such as Hebei, Shandong, Jiangsu, Sichuan and Shanxi. More than 100 titles are extremely rare.
- **Manchu Collection:** 400 titles. This extensive collection covers the fields of language and literature, philosophy, religion, politics and the Chinese classics, etc. It includes 45 manuscript items and 114 titles of the (Edward) Barrett collection. Some items were bilingual with parallel Chinese and Manchu versions printed side by side. "A Catalogue of the Manchu Books in the Library of Congress," by Jun Matsumura, in the *Toyo Gakuho*, vol. 57, nos. 1-2 (January 1976), contains essential bibliographical information about this collection.
- **Mongolian Collection.** The Library has 80 unique Mongolian classical works (3 manuscripts and 77 xylographs) which have been classified into such categories as: Canonical works, ritual and devotional works, philosophy, biography, history, language, medicine, and collectanea, etc. "A Description of the Mongolian Manuscripts and Xylographs in Washington, D.C.," by David M. Farquhar in the *Central Asiatic Journal*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1955), contains further information about this collection.
- **Naxi Collection:** 3,337 manuscripts. These Naxi (a northwest Yunnan tribe) pictograph books, acquired by Joseph F. Rock and Quentin Roosevelt between

1924 and 1945, mostly deal with sorcery and religious subjects. An annotated catalog of the collection is available in manuscript form in the Asian Division

## V. ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

The increasing availability of electronic resources on China Studies has mandated changes in the acquisition behavior of the Asian Division.

An example of the effect of electronic resources on collection development policies is the dwindled effort in purchasing local gazetteers. Originally, to uphold the strength in pre-modern local gazetteers and to continue the tradition, the Asian Division had placed a lot of emphasis on acquiring reprints of pre-modern local gazetteers and newly compiled local gazetteers. This emphasis, however, has been restrained recently because of their ever-increasing numbers available in the publishing market, as well as their enhanced availability in digital formats.

The same is true for yearbooks. Although yearbooks are important records of contemporary affairs and local activities, their formidable numbers have preempted any effort to collect comprehensively. Coupled with the massive uploading of yearbook data onto databases, the Division is now inclined to use its resources on yearbook databases rather than on the print copies.

Perhaps the greatest impact is felt in the acquisition of periodicals and newspapers. Recently the Division has decided to stop subscribing to most Chinese newspapers because of space problems and resort to newspaper databases, such as *China Core Newspaper Database* and *Taiwan News Database*, for solution. As for Chinese periodicals, a significant number of them are now accessible via subscribed databases such as *China Academic Journal*, *Central Journals* and *Taiwan Electronic Periodicals Service*, providing real incentive for the Division to curtail periodical subscription too.

The advancement in database production not only solves space problems, but also facilitates in-depth research with ease. Many searchable databases afford an indexing function unparalleled by traditional printed concordances.

In view of the said advantages, the Division will extend its efforts in database subscription whenever funds are available. As of August 2008, China-specific subscription databases accessible from the Asian Reading Room include: *Academia Sinica*, *Academic Conferences in China*, *China Data Online*, *China National Knowledge Infrastructure*, *China Times*, *Chinese Electronic Periodical Service*, *Dissertation of China*, *Duxiu*, *Encyclopedia of Taiwan*, *National Library & National Digital Library of China Databases* and *Taiwan Electronic Periodicals Service*. The following subscription databases will be added to this list soon: *ChinaInfoBank*, *Chinese Cultural Revolution Database*, *Quanguo Baokan Suoyin*, *Siku Quanshu* and *Soshoo*.

## **VI. WEAKNESSES/EXCLUSIONS**

In an evaluation a few years ago, the Chinese Collection had been criticized as needing improvement in areas such as political and social conditions, Chinese Communist Party and military affairs, foreign relations, business and economics. With the help of a Luce Foundation grant, the Division has been able to greatly increase holdings in these areas, especially in economics, business and foreign relations. However, there is still room for expansion for other areas. More proactive collection efforts are clearly in order.

In light of the newly established Asian American Studies Program in the Division, the weakness of the Chinese Collection in this area has surfaced. But efforts to substantially increase Chinese holdings on Asian/Chinese Americans need extra support than the normal book fund allocations as these materials are not normally obtainable via the channels already in place.

The Division chooses to deemphasize on some subject areas for two reasons: these areas have low usage and to avoid costly duplication with other institutions. Among the first category are: language teaching and pedagogy, cookbooks, recreation, sports, children's literature and novels. On the other hand, the Division avoids exceedingly large spending on areas some other institutions are already very strong at, such as: genealogical records (duplicates with and Genealogical Society of Utah) and traditional Chinese medicine (duplicates with the National Library of Medicine).