

The Asian Collections at the Library of Congress



Asian Division

April 2016

Area Studies Collections

» The Asian Division, founded in 1928, is one of four **Area Studies** divisions in Library Services' Collections and Services directorate:

- African and Middle Eastern Division
- **Asian Division**
- European Division
- Hispanic Division

Asian Collections in Other Divisions

- » Asia-related legal materials, maps, music, motion pictures, prints, and photographs are also housed and cared for by other divisions in the Library in collaboration with the Asian Division:
 - the Law Library
 - the Geography and Map Division (G&M)
 - the Prints and Photographs Division (P&P)
 - the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division (MBRS)
 - the Music Division
 - the Manuscript Division (MSS)

Current Asian Division Organization

Asian Division Collections:

- Asian American
Pacific Islanders
- Chinese
- Japanese
- Korean
(South and North)
- Mongolian - Tibetan
- South Asian
- Southeast Asian



Size of Asian Collections

(as of September 30, 2015)

	Monograph Volumes	Journals Titles	Journals Issues	Inactive Journals	Manuscripts	Microfilm Reels	Microfiche Titles	Microfiche Sheets	Manuscripts
China	1,151,808	5,686	204,107	10,826	0	20,764	119	4,646	0
Japan	1,202,654	8,089	110,837	9,451	0	14,532	277	21,767	0
Korea	303,088	2,470	93,981	5,598	830	3,274	1	32	830
Mongolia	10,291	78	1,181	99	0	168	2,213	3,919	0
South Asia	309,871	1,645	65,414	2,120	0	18,286	68,329	335,948	0
Southeast Asia	250,154	2,736	68,845	8,462	0	12,852	41,612	187,778	0
Tibet	13,021	55	538	37	0	823	7,294	14,763	0
Total	3,241,474	21,381	547,540	36,593	29,030	70,699	119,845	568,853	29,030

The Beginning ...

- » 1865: First Asian collection transferred from the Smithsonian Institution
 - Southeast Asia and Pacific islands
 - Collected by Lt. Charles Wilkes in Singapore between 1838-42

- » 1867: The Congress passed the international exchange of publications act which authorizes the Library to exchange publications with other countries.



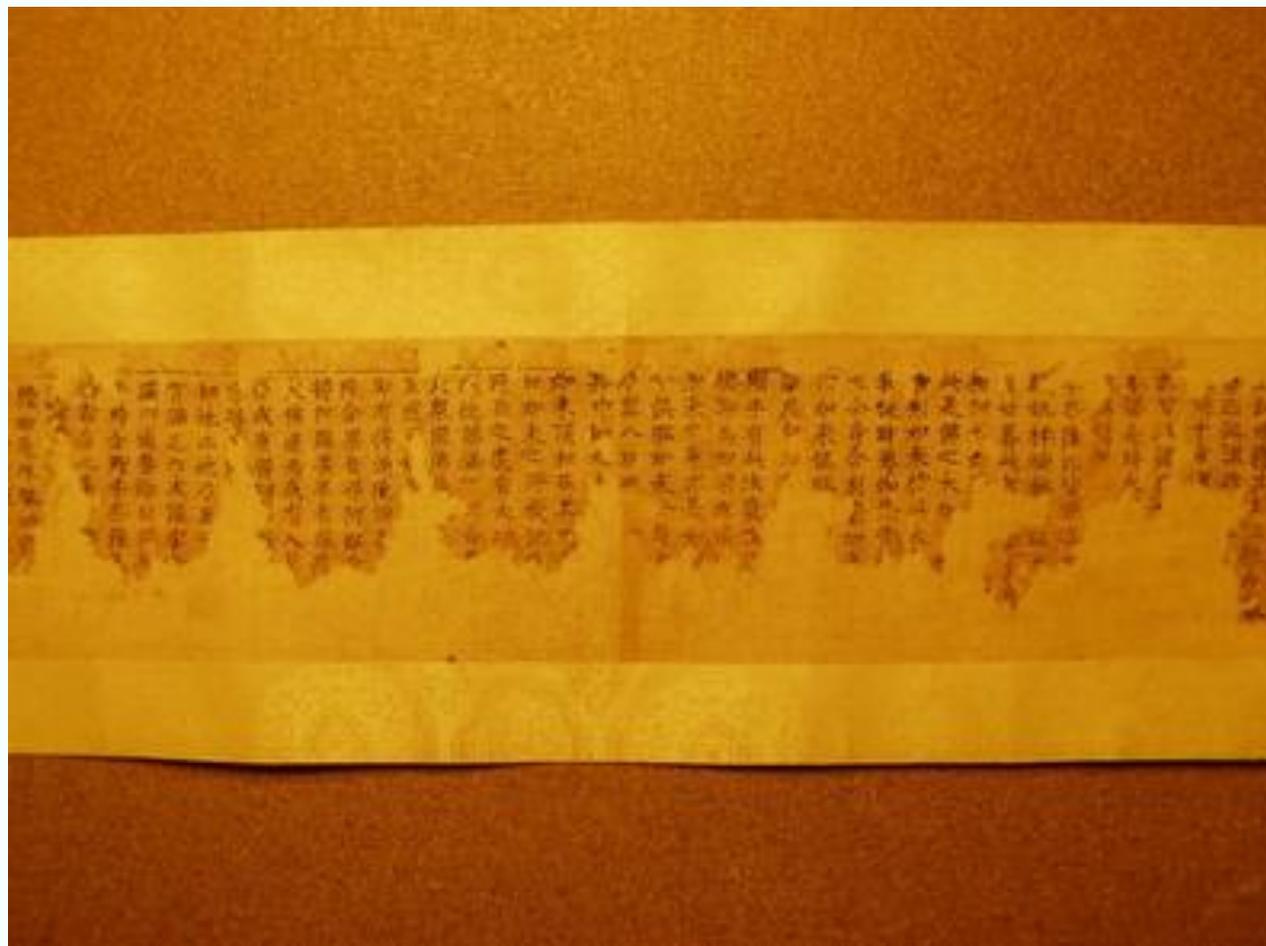
The Chinese Collection

- » 1869: The Emperor of China Tongzhi (同治) presented to the Library of Congress 10 major Chinese works in 933 volumes.



Selected Samples in the Chinese Collection

A Buddhist Sutra from the Thunder Peak Pagoda - 975 AD



Selected Samples in the Chinese Collection

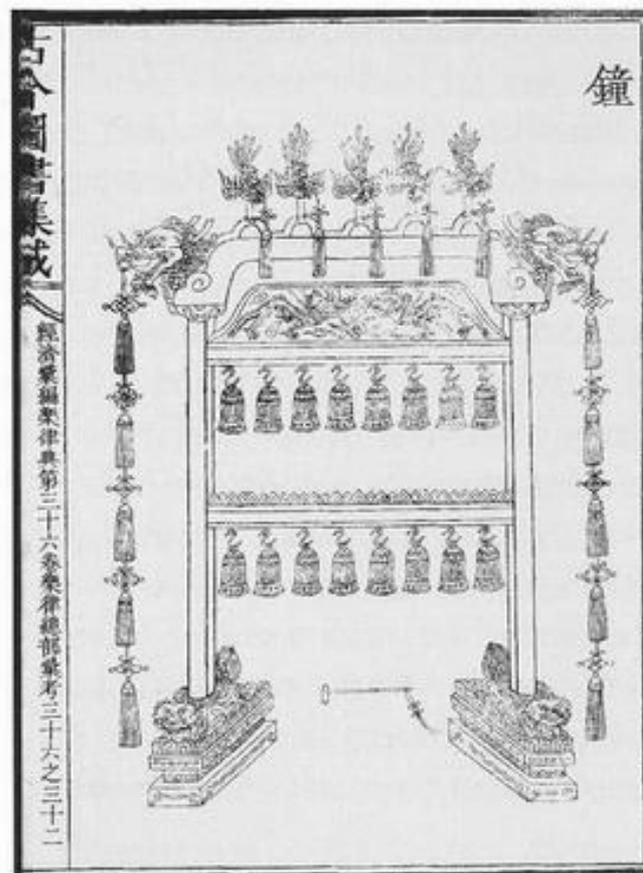
The Great Encyclopedia of the Emperor Yongle

1560s copy of the 1409 manuscript



Selected Samples in the Chinese Collection

The Imperial Encyclopedia of 1895-1898 (in 5000 vols.)



Selected Samples in the Chinese Collection

The Naxi pictographic manuscripts



The Japanese Collection

- » In 1875, the exchange of government publications began between the two countries.
- » In 1905, a significant gift of 658 illustrated books was received from Crosby Stuart Noyes.
- » In 1907, Dr. Kan'ichi Asakawa of Yale University was commissioned to purchase 9,072 rare books.
- » Since 1930 when Dr. Shiho Sakanishi arrived at the Library as the first official Japanese librarian, a systematic effort has been made to expand the Japanese collection.

JP collection history: www.loc.gov/rr/asian/j-display



Selected Samples in the Japanese Collection

The *Dharani* 百万搭陀罗尼 prayer charms dated 770 AD



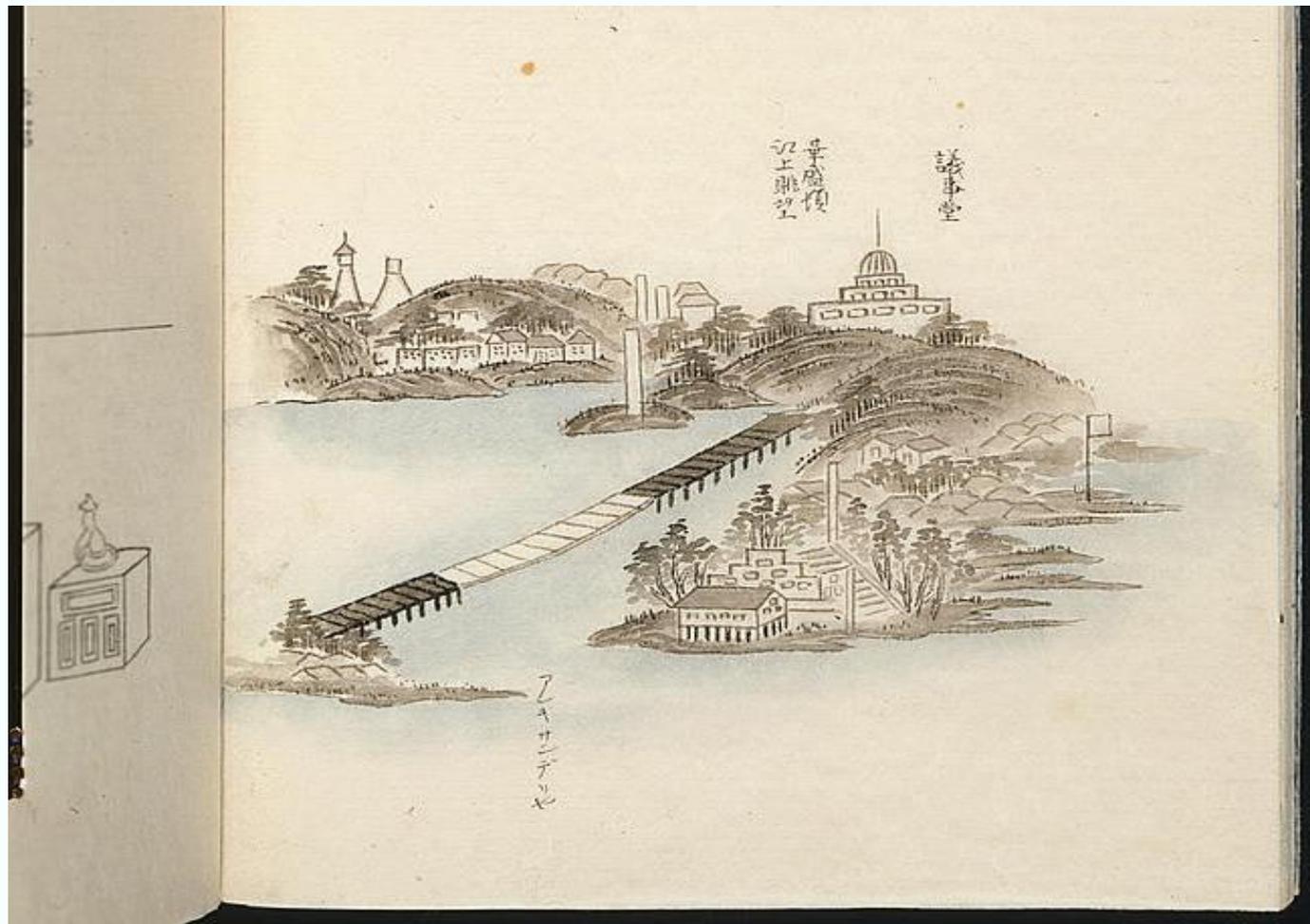
Selected Samples in the Japanese Collection

A literary masterpiece – *The Tale of the Genji* (1654)



A View of the U.S. Capitol in 1860

A hand-drawn sketch by a member of the Japanese delegation



Inoh Map of Japan

Only known surviving set of Japan maps by Japan's first scientific map maker **Inoh Tadataka** (1745-1818); discovered in the Library of Congress in 2001

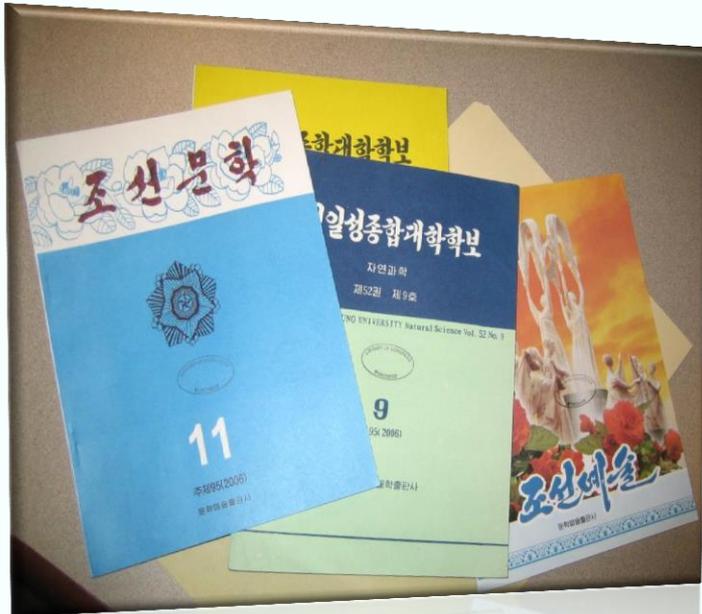




The Korean Collection

- » The Library began to collect the Korean materials in 1950 when the Korean War broke out .
- » The collection is now one of the largest and most comprehensive collection outside of East Asia.
- » As of today, the Library has over 303,000 in the Korean language , as well as about 21,000 Japanese and 10,000 English language books on Korea with over 7600 periodical titles and 250 newspapers dating from the 1920s to the present.
- » The Library has over ten thousand items and 271 different serial titles from North Korea, including 17 titles in English and Japanese.
- » It includes 550 rare titles (3,500 volumes) of rare books, many of which were obtained in the 1927.

The North Korean Collection



One of the strengths of the Library is that it contains the biggest collection of North Korean items published in particular from the 1940s-60s. Many of these materials in the collection are no longer available even in North Korea itself because they were destroyed during the War.

The collection has been vital to scholars and government officials trying to understand policies related to North Korea. Also, they are essential to understand the medical, technological and industrial development in North Korea.

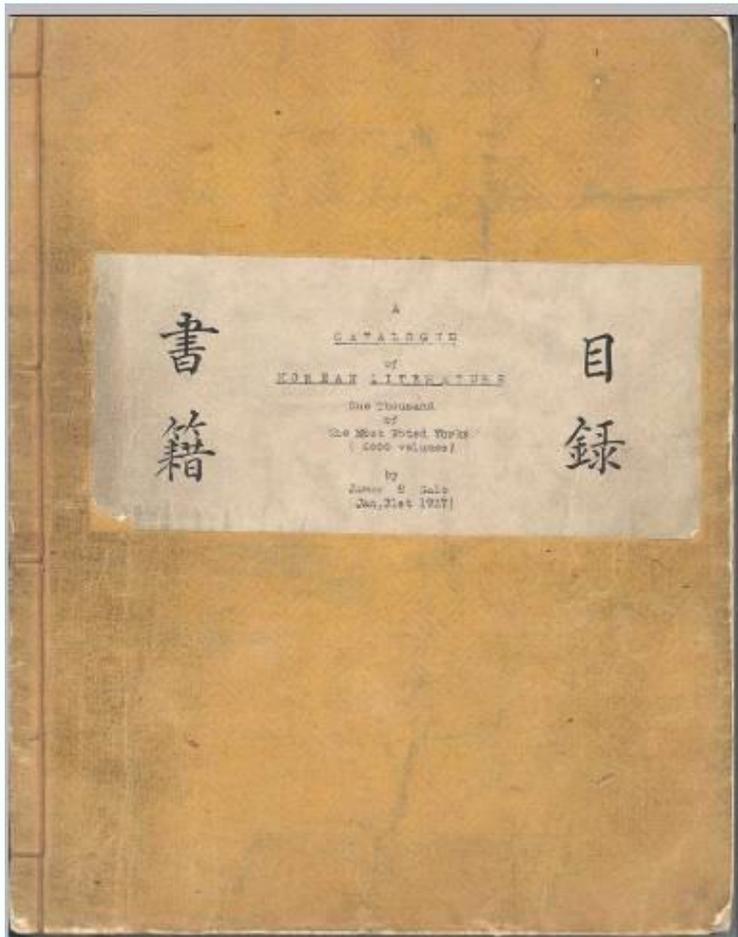


Sample of
the North Korean collection

The caption reads, “If the American empire provokes another war, only death will be their reward.”

[Choson Yesul 조선예술 7, 1969]

Catalogue of Korean Literature by James S. Gale 1927



- The Library has some 550 titles of rare Korean books, many of which were obtained in the 1927.
- The most important contributor: Dr. James S. Gale, a Canadian missionary.

Selected Samples in the Korean Collection



Tongguk Yi Sangguk Chip (東國李相國集)

The Library copy was printed in 1421.

But, the original his work was printed with metal movable type in 1241 in Korea, some 215 years before Gutenberg used a similar process to print his famous Bibles in Germany.

The Tibetan Collection

- » The first Tibetan books arrived at the Library in 1899 as gifts from William W. Rockhill.
- » The rare collection now has 3,600 volumes, including several sets of the Kanjur and Tanjur.
- » The Library's Office in New Delhi began acquiring Tibetan books in the 1960's and currently acquires them from Bhutan, China, India, and Nepal.
- » The entire collection, famous worldwide, has 15,600 Tibetan volumes in both traditional and Western format.

Selected Samples in the Tibetan Collection

Vajrapani Thang-ka – A unique form of Tibetan art



Selected Samples in the Tibetan Collection

The Tibetan Sutra of the Perfection of Wisdom, 12 vols., 18th century



The Mongolian Collection

- » The Mongolian Collection also began with gifts from William W. Rockhill in 1901.
- » It contains many original blockprints and manuscripts acquired in the early 20th c.
- » In 1992 the Library renewed efforts to acquire current publications. Currently the collection contains nearly 6,000 monographs and 4,000 microfiche and is rapidly growing.

Selected Samples in the Mongolian Collection



The South Asian Collection

- » Created in 1904 when the Library purchased over 4,000 books and pamphlets from the German Indologist, Dr. Albrecht Weber.
- » Covers over 100 modern languages used in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and the Maldives.



Selected Samples in the South Asian Collection

This 1452 manuscript of the *Jaina Kalpasutra* is from Gujarat in western India



ABOVE: "Jaina Kalpasūtra." The mother of Mahāvīra, the Jaina religion's savior, sees a series of dreams telling her she is to bear a truly great man. In gouache and gold paint, this 1452 manuscript is from Gujarat in western India. This scripture from the Kalpasūtra tells the story of Mahāvīra and previous Jinas, "victors," who came to the world to teach it the right path. (Southern Asian Collection, Asian Division)

Selected Samples in the South Asian Collection

Nepalese manuscript c. 1900 in Newari and Sanskrit



The Southeast Asian Collection

- » Representing a wide range of diverse cultures, religions and languages, modern Southeast Asia includes the nations of Brunei, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- » The Division's holdings in the languages of the region include modern publications as well as rare, historical materials.

Selected Samples in the Southeast Asian Collection

Inscribed Bamboo tubes from the Philippines, written in old Indic script



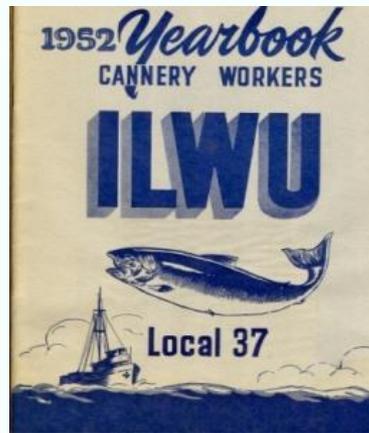
Selected Samples in the Southeast Asian Collection

The birth of the Vietnamese alphabet

A 17th century Roman-script alphabet called Quốc Ngữ



Asian American Pacific Islander Collections



The Primary Holdings Initiative

now include

The Betty Lee Sung Papers

The Carlos Bulosan Archive

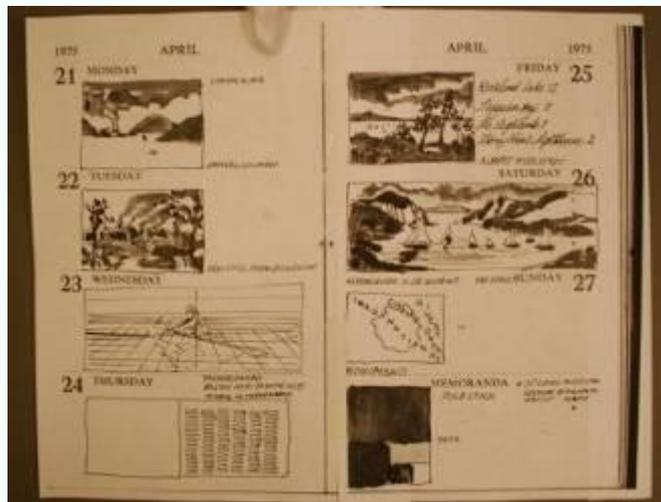
The Royal Morales Papers

The James Miho Diaries

The Jade Snow Wong Papers

and

The Vietnamese American Archive



Collaboration with Overseas Offices

- » The accelerated growth of the library collections from South and Southeast Asia since the 1960s resulted from the establishment of the Library's overseas offices in New Delhi, Jakarta, and Islamabad.
- » In addition to these offices in Asia, LC's Overseas Operations Division also operates offices in Cairo, Nairobi, and Rio de Janeiro.



Building Asian Digital Resources

In the digital age, the Asian Division is moving ahead in supplementing its physical or analog collections by acquiring a growing body of electronic resources, including e-books, e-journals, e-newspapers, and electronic databases, both digitized from printed materials or born digital.



Digitized Rare Books & Other Collections

- Japanese four rare books in the [Digital Nara Ehon](#) collection.
- Illustrated [Tale of Genji](#) (1654).
- 2,000 prints from the [Ukiyo-e collection](#) from the Prints and Photographs collection.
- The complete set of [207 large-scale maps of Japan](#) made by Inoh Tadataka 伊能忠敬 (1816-1819).



Library of Congress + [View all 553](#)



+ 425 Items

National Diet Library + [View all 15](#)



National Library of Brazil + [View all 156](#)



Brown University Library + [View all 20](#)



8000 - 499 500 - 1499 1500 - 1699 1700 - 1799 1800 - 1849 1850 - 1899 1900 - 1949 1950 +

Yale University Library + [View all 27](#)



Website of the Asian Division

www.loc.gov/rr/asian

The Library of Congress >> Especially for Researchers >> Research Centers



Asian Reading Room

AREA STUDIES
ASIAN DIVISION

Home Find in Asian Reading Room Pages

General Information:

- [About the Reading Room](#)
- Asian Division Collections
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 - [Japanese Collection](#)
 - [Korean Collection](#)
 - [Mongolian Collection](#)
 - [South Asian Collection](#)
 - [Southeast Asian Collection](#)
 - [Tibetan Collection](#)
 - [Asian-American Pacific Islander Collection](#)
- [Asian Division Friends Society](#)
- [Florence Tan Moeson Fellowship](#)
- [Search Our Catalogs](#)

Using the Reading Room:

- [Research Orientation to LC](#)
- [About the Visitor's Center](#)
- [Copies \(Photoduplication\)](#)
- [Interlibrary Loan](#)
- [Policy: Access to Rare Materials](#)
- For the most efficient reader services, please use [the Asian Division's Ask-A-Librarian form](#) to make your request for materials at least two days before you get to the Asian Reading Room.



Location: 101 Independence Ave. SE
Thomas Jefferson Building, LJ 150
Washington, DC 20540-4810
Telephone: (202) 707-3766, 5426
Fax: (202) 252-3336
[Contact Us](#)
[Map showing location](#)

Hours:
Weekdays: 8:30am to 5:00pm
Closed Saturday, Sunday & [Federal Holidays](#)

2016 Florence Tan Moeson Fellowship announcement

Digital Projects:

- [Korean Bibliography](#)
- [Soviet-Korean Bibliography](#)
- [Philippine Bibliography](#)
- [Naxi Manuscript Collection](#)
- [Tibetan Oral History Archive Project](#)

Databases:

- [LC Subscription Databases](#)
- [Asian Studies e-resources](#)
- [Chinese e-resources](#)
- [Japanese e-resources](#)
- [Korean e-resources](#)
- [Korean Serial Database](#)

Publications:

- [Asian Collections: 2007 Illustrated Guide](#)
- [Annotated catalog on Robert Morrison](#)
- [A World of Books](#)
- [Indonesian Bibliography](#)
- [Romanization Tables](#)

Ask a Librarian

 Want to send the reference staff a question about the Library's Asian Collections.

Asian Reading Room



Thomas Jefferson Bldg.

LJ-150

Monday – Friday

8:30 – 5:00

www.loc.gov/rr/asian

The Florence Tan Moeson Research Fellowship



- » Established through the generosity of Florence Tan Moeson, the Moeson Fellowship provides individuals with the opportunity to pursue research on East, Southeast, or South Asia (including the overseas Asian communities), using the unparalleled Asian collections of the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.



A large, ornate library interior with wooden bookshelves, a staircase, and a long wooden table with books. The scene is brightly lit, and the text "THANK YOU" is overlaid in the center.

THANK YOU