

**Inside Major East Asian Library
Collections in North America, Volume 2**

“This compendium of interviews with East Asian librarians in the U.S. and Canada affords the reader insight on multiple levels into the careers of individual librarians and the commonalities and distinctive aspects of individual East Asian collections, particularly rare items. A valuable introduction to the world of East Asian librarianship, the book provides a variety of perspectives on daily work, career paths, administration, problems facing the field, and fulfillment found in the work. Collectively, the essays are an affirmation of the importance of printed collections and a ringing endorsement of East Asian librarianship.”

— **Gail King (Retired Asian Librarian, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University)**

“Someday, when we all realize how special librarians are, we shall find that this book offers a most intimate insight into their lives. With a consistent set of questions, a comparative perspective emerges from this direct methodology – a new dimension to library studies that allow real librarians to speak for themselves.”

— **Prof. Lian-Hee Wee (Department of English Language and Literature, Hong Kong Baptist University)**

“I am very glad to hear of the publication of this new book introducing some of the major East Asian library collections and their curators. I am sure it will be read with interest not only by professionals in the field but also by anyone concerned with recent developments in area studies.”

— **Charles Aylmer (Head of Chinese Department, Cambridge University Library)**

“*Inside the World’s Major East Asian Library Collections in North America* is a highly informative and much anticipated account of many of the world-renowned Asian book and manuscript collections connecting East and West. Celebrated and supported by their academic institutions locally, the libraries discussed in this comprehensive volume are often unparalleled behemoths of knowledge holding published and archival resources that are at times completely unique and yet accessible regionally, nationally, and internationally. In our globally connected 21st century, these exceptional libraries collect the literary genius and recorded histories of the past and allow present and future scholars to study some of the rarest primary sources to advance our field of study in the decades and centuries to come.”

— **Dr Florian Knothe (Director of the University Museum and Art Gallery, University of Hong Kong)**

“*Inside the World’s Major East Asian Library Collections in North America* is an important new title to collections experts of Asian materials. At a time when the world is facing tragedies of anti-Asian racism, it is critical to continue to collect and preserve Asian collections for scholars and students for teaching, research, and learning to continue sustaining awareness and understanding of Asian cultures and histories. The editors of this volume have insight and experience in

balancing the languages and areas of academic libraries of North America, focusing not only on CJK, but important ethnic collections from the Okinawan to Cantonese collections. It is an outstanding contribution to the field and serves as a key reference tool for librarians, researchers, and cultural administrators.”

— **Allan Cho (Community Engagement Librarian, Program Services,
Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, University of British Columbia)**

“A profoundly interesting and useful volume of 42 interviews with librarians administering East Asian collections in North America. It is an excellent read for those interested in developing an international library collection, as well as students and researchers in East Asian Studies. Contributors discuss how they entered this branch of librarianship, developed their collections, and share their practices. As a developer and instructor of the course “ILS 450: Global Perspectives in Librarianship,” this is a perfect model embracing trends in international collections, a specialization path in Library Science, and research on how international collections are developed. Overall, it is a well-articulated compendium of interviews that are addictive and hard to stop reading.”

— **Dr Tamara E. Blesh (Adjunct Instructor III, University of Maine at Augusta)**

“The interview-based approach to writing about librarianship is a fascinating choice by editors of this volume. Through conversations with over 40 leading experts in the field, *Inside East Asian Collections in North America* not only charts the history and landscape of the most important East Asian library collections, but it also brings quiet librarianship to life by offering rare insights into the work-related joys, anxieties, and strategic thinking of these key professionals. Their success stories are just as diverse as their backgrounds and career paths. Highly recommended for anyone interested in East Asian studies or area studies librarianship.”

— **Dr Shenxiao Tong (East Asian Studies Librarian,
Edinburgh University Library)**

“The library is an important hub for the exchange of human knowledge and an important organizational form for the exchange of different cultures. For a long time, libraries in North America have collected a lot of valuable literature resources from Asia, especially East Asia and Southeast Asia. These resources have become important in promoting inheritance and mutual learning of Eastern and Western civilizations. Professional librarians who contribute to the collection and service of these resources are the civilized messengers and guardians of this culture. The unique achievements of this book reveal their efforts and ideals for us. It is not only worthy of learning and reference by professionals, but it also enables our wider audience to realize the sublimity of this profession.”

— **Professor Qingshan Zhou (Department of Information
Management, Peking University)**

“The book, being a collection of interviews with North American East Asian librarians, is extremely informative for professional librarians, oral historians,

and enthusiasts for literature and libraries. Furthermore, it is inspiring for East Asian Librarians, and it could enrich their work in terms of building collections and library management. It provides a useful comparison between East Asian collections/libraries in North America – it's quite an accomplishment for the editors.”

— **Katarína Feriančíková (Librarian, Library of Far Eastern Studies, Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague)**

“The diverse experience of East Asian librarians showcased in this book give readers a kaleidoscopic view of this unique group of experts. As an advocate of Eastern culture in the Western world, they ventured into the field with interest and built a successful career with passion. The stories will inspire anyone who listen to their heart.”

— **Esther Woo (Director of Library Services, The University of Hong Kong Libraries)**

“Ultimately, the success of any library depends on its ability to connect with its users through its resources. This publication is a very unique overview of some of the major East Asian Library Collections found across North America. The librarians’ reflections included here not only highlight the commitment they have to protecting information that is culturally and historically significant, but they also explore their professional obligation and determination to provide users with academic sources that reflect a truly global community. The items housed in these great libraries are no longer curiosities; they are acclaimed and relevant academic resources that do much more than simply supplement university collections. Now, at last, an extensive publication has been produced to showcase the great variety of libraries, librarians, and institutions aiming to empower students to find resources that will enable them to produce academic works of cultural significance and scholarship.”

— **Andrew J. Stark (Associate Dean and Head of Libraries and Information Services, The Southport School, Queensland, Australia)**

“This book offers a lively, original, and very instructive introduction to the wealth and diversity of East Asian collections in North America, the largest outside Asia. Focusing on librarians’ perspectives, it underlines the challenges of East Asian librarianship in the context of an ever more globalized and technological world where flexibility, creativity, and cooperation are at the heart of knowledge collecting, sharing, and mediating. As a librarian, I welcome the editors’ approach, which brings to light the passionate efforts of a profession often left in the shadows. These librarians contribute to the essential tasks of advancing knowledge and, even more crucial in these challenging times, helping bridge the gap between cultures. Not only will this book be of special interest for librarians, academics and students in East Asian studies, but it will also prove to be an informative reading for anyone interested in the evolution of area studies librarianship.”

— **Soline Suchet-Lau (Deputy Head of Collection Development Department; Asia Team Leader; Subject Librarian, Taiwan and Chinese Pre-modern Collections, BULAC: University Library for Languages and Civilisations, Paris)**

“Patrick Lo, Hermina Anghelescu, and Bradley Allard introduce the major East Asian and Southeast Asian collection libraries in North America and their librarians to us through a series of interviews they have conducted. This is a grand tour of librarianship and the wealth of knowledge that is well preserved and developed in these major libraries.”

— **Prof. Tai-Lok Lui (Chair Professor of Hong Kong Studies; Director, Academy of Hong Kong Studies; Director, Centre for Greater China Studies, The Education University of Hong Kong)**

“With all of the tensions worldwide, it is important to resolve misunderstandings and build trust. This exploration of East Asian collections in North America, as described by different East Asian Studies librarians, is a doorway to the culture of East Asia.”

— **Kazuyuki Sunaga (Professor of Library and Information Science, Kokugakuin University in Tokyo, Japan)**

“Through this volume, Patrick Lo and his co-authors bring to light what is known by some, but unknown by many: that libraries in North America hold some of the world’s greatest collections of East Asian materials. Across Canada and the United States, the range and depth of these collections is brought to light in this fascinating exploration of these major collections. In addition to these explorations, the editors include introductions to the librarians and curators who build and maintain these collections, as well as the scholars who utilize them to serve the growing global interest in East Asian studies.”

– **Peter E. Sidorko (Senior Consultant and Former University Librarian (2011–2021), The University of Hong Kong)**

“Librarians are the bridge between readers and books. East Asian librarians are the bridge between Eastern culture and Western culture. This book is the bridge between the outside world and the East Asian library. It brings to light the characteristics and management of East Asian library collections from the perspective of the librarians, making the East Asian Library a place with warmth and vitality. Through the introduction of this book, the general public can learn that there are so many distinctive East Asian libraries in the United States and Canada.”

– **Prof. Chao-Chen Chen (Chair Professor of Center for General Education and University Librarian of Chung Yuan Christian University)**

“For so many of us, libraries are a place of sanctuary – a space for contemplation, learning, and inspiration. *Inside the World’s Major East Asian Library Collections in North America* takes us behind the scenes of world-leading East Asian libraries and offers an intriguing and detailed insight into the working practices of librarians, as

well as the challenges and frustrations they face in managing collections both large and small. This two-volume set not only provides a lens through which to understand librarianship today; it also identifies new trends in the field and possibilities for the future. In sum, an inspirational and thought-provoking read.”

— **Amelia Allsop (Research Manager at the Hong Kong Heritage Project, and Co-founder at History Ink)**

The book *Inside the World's Major East Asian Collections in North America* adopts interviews as a unique approach to capture the vigorous development of East Asian librarianship and East Asian collections in the past 30-plus years. It paints a colorful picture of librarians in this field. They come from different cultural and academic backgrounds – many entered the field as their second-career choice, but all have devoted their passion, energies, and various professional training to librarianship. They have experienced the dramatic changes in the field and have grown and contributed so much. They are one of the main reasons that we see the flourishing condition of East Asian libraries and collections in North America today.”

— **Luo Zhou (Librarian for Chinese studies, International & Area Studies Department, Duke University Libraries)**

Inside Major East Asian Library Collections in North America, Volume 2

EDITED BY

PATRICK LO

University of Tsukuba, Japan

HERMINA G.B. ANGHELESCU

Wayne State University, USA

BRADLEY ALLARD

Clark County Public Library, USA



United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2023

Copyright © 2023 Patrick Lo, Hermina G.B. Anghelescu and Bradley Allard.
Published under exclusive licence by Emerald Publishing Limited.
Foreword © 2023 Anita Dewi,
Foreword © 2023 Martin Heijdra and
Foreword © 2023 Frederick Nesta.
Chapter 25 © 2023 Hermina G.B. Anghelescu and Alice Yuet Ling Law.

Reprints and permissions service

Contact: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by The Copyright Licensing Agency and in the USA by The Copyright Clearance Center. Any opinions expressed in the chapters are those of the authors. Whilst Emerald makes every effort to ensure the quality and accuracy of its content, Emerald makes no representation implied or otherwise, as to the chapters' suitability and application and disclaims any warranties, express or implied, to their use.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80455-140-0 (Print)
ISBN: 978-1-80455-139-4 (Online)
ISBN: 978-1-80455-141-7 (Epub)



ISOQAR certified
Management System,
awarded to Emerald
for adherence to
Environmental
standard
ISO 14001:2004.

Certificate Number 1985
ISO 14001



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Contents

Foreword 1	<i>xiii</i>
Foreword 2	<i>xv</i>
Foreword 3	<i>xvii</i>
East Asian Librarianship and Library Collections in North America: Introduction	
<i>Hermina G.B. Anghelescu, Patrick Lo and Bradley Allard</i>	<i>1</i>
Chapter 1 Jim Cheng, Director, C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University	<i>23</i>
Chapter 2 Dr Peter Zhou, Director, C. V. Starr East Asian Library, University of California, Berkeley	<i>33</i>
Chapter 3 Dr Ying Zhang, Research Librarian for Asian Studies, University of California Irvine	<i>45</i>
Chapter 4 Dr Hong Cheng, Chinese Studies Librarian, Richard C. Rudolph East Asian Library, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)	<i>51</i>
Chapter 5 Katrina Lacerna, Asian Pacific Resource Center Librarian, Los Angeles County Library	<i>63</i>
Chapter 6 Xi Chen, Chinese Studies Librarian and East Asia Collection Strategist, University of California San Diego	<i>71</i>
Chapter 7 Mark Stephen Mir, Archivist and Resource Coordinator, Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History, University of San Francisco (Retired)	<i>81</i>

Chapter 8 Dr Brian Vivier, Director, Center for Global Collections, and Chinese Studies Librarian, University of Pennsylvania	<i>91</i>
Chapter 9 Joshua Seufert, Chinese Studies Librarian, East Asian Library, Princeton University	<i>99</i>
Chapter 10 Runxiao Zhu, East Asian Studies Librarian, Oberlin College	<i>111</i>
Chapter 11 John Baky, Dean of Libraries, Emeritus, Curator, Rare Books & Manuscripts and Dr Heather Willever-Farr Special Collections Librarian, Connelly Library La Salle University	<i>117</i>
Chapter 12 Dr Kenneth Klein, Head, East Asian Library (Retired), University of Southern California	<i>131</i>
Chapter 13 Hsi-chu Bolick, Librarian for East Asian Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	<i>139</i>
Chapter 14 Haihui Zhang, Head, East Asian Library, University of Pittsburgh	<i>151</i>
Chapter 15 Dongyun Ni, Department Chair, Asia Collection, Chinese Studies Librarian, University of Hawai'i at Manoa	<i>159</i>
Chapter 16 Dr Timothy Davis, Asian Studies Librarian, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University	<i>167</i>
Chapter 17 Nien Lin Xie, Librarian for East Asian Studies, Dartmouth College	<i>181</i>
Chapter 18 Anlin Yang, East Asian Studies Librarian, University of Wisconsin-Madison	<i>189</i>
Chapter 19 Ying Liu, Subject Librarian for Asian Studies, Linguistics, and Religious Studies, University of Victoria Libraries	<i>199</i>
Chapter 20 Dr Stephen Qiao, Chinese Studies Librarian, Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library, University of Toronto	<i>209</i>

Chapter 21 Dr Jack Hang-tat Leong, Founding Director (2007–2020) and Helen Tang, Acting Director (2020–2021), Richard Charles Lee Canada–Hong Kong Library, University of Toronto	221
Chapter 22 Yue Shu, Librarian, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Library, Smithsonian Libraries and Archives	231
Chapter 23 Yue Ma, Director of Collections and Research, Museum of Chinese in America	241
Chapter 24 Dr William A. Peniston, Librarian and Archivist Emeritus, The Newark Museum of Art	249
Chapter 25 East Asian Librarianship and Library Collections in the United States and Canada: A Selective Bibliography, 2000–2020 <i>Hermina G.B. Anghelescu and Alice Yuet Ling Law</i>	257
East Asian Librarianship and Library Collections in North America: Conclusion <i>Hermina G.B. Anghelescu, Patrick Lo and Bradley Allard</i>	281

This page intentionally left blank

Foreword 1

Since day one of my career in the academic library space, I have always been wondering whether my multidisciplinary and bilingual background will be helpful for my roles in the sector. Reading through the interviews in the chapters of this book has reassured me that it actually is. The chapters also strengthen my belief that learning should be and is ongoing – it's never ending. The rich, lifelong experiences that the interviewees have had throughout their careers in the sector have reinforced this thought of mine. I can see myself reflecting on all the chapters, looking back at my initial role as subject librarian and all my other previous roles as learning skills adviser, research and learning coordinator, team leader, and projecting on to my recently secured position as a liaison coordinator.

Another point that I learned from this book is the importance of professional associations and networks in enabling collaborations with colleagues across different institutions. While the chapters are of different individuals, it is clear that regardless of where you are in the library sector, professional networks and relationships that you build are key to your and your library's success. Collaboration clearly works much better.

One key aspect that was revealed in this book is the importance of East and Southeast Asian resources in the library world as they play significant roles in nourishing academic research and interests in Asian studies. Putting on both my academic librarian and president of Asian Library Resources of Australia (ALRA) hats, I admire how both the book authors and interviewees make the importance of Asian resources very explicit and clear. Amidst the waves of changes hitting the sector these days, and financial and human resources constraints in managing and developing collections, East and Southeast Asian resources are definitely not to be dismissed.

The interviews with high-level library leaders that make up the chapters of this book are of questions that are very personal, yet highly professional. This starts with a question on the background of each interviewee, followed by conversations on their career paths, both prior to the interviewees becoming key profile professionals in the library sector and how they end up where they are (or were, as in some cases the interviewees are retirees). Interestingly, none of the interviewees sees themselves as having “a typical day of work.” Every single day is different – mysterious at times, yet always exciting. This shows just how dynamic a work life in the library sector is.

Maintaining its recency, the book also addresses the interviewees' views on the new trends in librarianship, particularly in the contexts of libraries with large collections of special materials. As one would expect, digitization is highlighted across the chapters in the book. These leaders are also pragmatic in sharing their views on new

opportunities and challenges faced by East and Southeast Asian librarians, both in North America, where they are based, and in other parts of the world. They are also very open in expressing what they find most rewarding and most frustrating about their current and past roles in the East and Southeast Asian library space. What I also find amazing is their advice on what and how to see if we are to pursue careers in librarianship overseeing Asian collections. One of the chapters closes with a message:

Become a librarian; you will find it rewarding. You will have opportunities to utilize your training, talent, and natural abilities to their fullest extent. You will enjoy both professional and personal fulfillment interacting with human memory in the form of books, manuscripts, artifacts, and contemporary scholarship. You will be able to serve academia, bridge cultural gaps, and broaden the scope of your knowledge, all the while knowing that you are serving society.

How inspiring!

To me, reading this book is like looking at the mirror of the past, present, and future. A few head nods upon reflecting on my past and present experiences, mirroring them to the interviews that are laid open in this book. And certainly, more head nods going forward. The book has led me to being optimistic about the future of librarianship in the East and Southeast Asian areas. Sure, there has been and will continue to be swings, back and forth, of the strength and existence of Asian collections in libraries across the world. At the end of the day, though, it is up to professionals in the library sector to be creative and make things happen whenever opportunities come our way. Just the message gained from this book make it worth reading, indeed!

Anita Dewi, PhD
Liaison Coordinator, Monash University Library, Australia
President, Asian Library Resources of Australia (ALRA)



Foreword 2

Over the last half a decade, Dr Patrick Lo, Prof. Hermina Anghelescu and Bradley Allard have almost single-handedly created a genre of their own, documenting what makes different practicing librarians, archivists and museum curators across the world tick. And while one of their more recent works includes interviews with academic and research library directors for whom career paths have been available for longer and are more or less established, I detect a definite predilection on their part for subfields and more or less niche fields, in which personal interests relatively play a more prominent role. Orchestra and opera librarians, monastery library directors, Hong Kong heritage managers and archivists. Areas, therefore, where individual personalities matter.

I myself was fortunate to be included in an earlier 2017 work, *Inside the World's Major East Asian Collections*, which cast its net worldwide, concentrating on European collections, although collections in Asian countries, and just a handful of North American institutions were then included (the relevant individuals, incidentally but significantly, all coming from outside that continent – building cultural bridges comes naturally to this field.)

There was clearly room therefore for inviting a much larger contingent from North America, and that is what this book delivers on. For me, looking at the contents of this work is like seeing and hearing so many friends and colleagues who have been and are passionate enough to dedicate their life-time's work to enable understanding between East and Southeast Asia and North America. Friends and colleagues of all ages, because included here are both old-timers, some perhaps already retired, and also a great number of active current leaders and, especially welcome, very promising younger librarians. The book as a whole thus gives a very welcome personal touch to the important history of the infrastructure of cultural exchange, to be read alongside the more impersonal institutional histories as already published in that wonderful seminal 2010 collection *Collecting Asia: East Asian libraries in North America, 1868–2008*. Berkeley's Peter Zhou, who edited that work, himself is interviewed in this current work. The field is changing (as it has always been), and there will always be a next generation. What a wonderful set of interviews this is to leave that to that generation.

Dr Martin Heijdra
Director
The East Asian Library and the Gest Collection
Princeton University



Foreword 3

In his interview in this volume, Joshua Seufert, Chinese Studies Librarian at Princeton's East Asian Library, noted that while North American East Asia collections are seen as core collections, their European counterparts are more often viewed by their parent institutions as curiosities, rather than as integral parts of the collection as a whole. A related volume edited by Dr Lo, *Inside the World's Major East Asian Collections: One Belt, One Road and Beyond* (Elsevier, 2017) concentrated on collections in Europe, Taiwan, and Hong Kong including major collections at the Vatican, the British Library, the Bodleian, Cambridge, and, in the United States, at Berkeley and Princeton. This current book extends the first book by looking at collections in 42 North American institutions. It follows the same successful format of using a structured interview template that allows the reader to compare libraries, librarians, and archivists from different institutions, different countries, and different cultures and it forms a necessary companion volume to the earlier work.

The 42 North American institutions presented here are of a variety of sizes, some small but precious for what they provide and preserve, some extensive, such as the 3.9 million print and digital volumes at the C. V. Starr East Asian Library at Columbia University. There is some institutional overlap with the previous book as Berkeley and Princeton appear in both volumes, but the interviews are complementary since different librarians with different responsibilities and histories speak here, helping to round out the picture of each of those collections and showing the diversity of talents and outlooks that librarians and archivists bring to their work. The small libraries and collections can be the most interesting as they may house special material not found elsewhere, such as the collection of artifacts, documents, and oral history at the Museum of the Chinese in America, or the Richard Charles Lee Canada-Hong Kong Library at the University of Toronto where the focus is on preserving the history of Chinese life in Canada and in Hong Kong, or "The Imaginative Representations of the Vietnam War Collection", of 25,000 items preserving the literary interpretations of the war, curated by John Baky, a Vietnam veteran, at La Salle University.

Those interested in library management will find the questions asked here about the origin and purpose of interviewees library, the skills they bring to their work, what their daily routine is like, how they would describe their management style, what management issues they face, and how they handle the challenges of the job to be very informative. Chances of success or failure can often be seen just by looking at an organization chart and see where a department is in the institutional hierarchy and how well or poorly staffed it may be, but only by talking to the librarians and archivists can we really see the story, not only of success or failure but also of the role of individual dedication and professionalism.

The contributions in this volume are fascinating in what they reveal both about the collections and about the individuals who curate them. Because of the consistency of the interview template, it is possible to compare the backgrounds and individual achievements of each of the librarians/archivists, get an overview of their collection, and see their assessments of their distinctive management styles.

Scholars with an interest in East Asia will appreciate being able to have an inside, curator's view, of important East Asian collections. This book provides them with an opportunity to see the inner workings of libraries and archives and the pressures and constraints that the staff work under. This volume will also provide an insight into familiar collections but may also lead to discoveries in collections that they may not have known about, especially of the special collections within the special collections, such as the extensive collection of Chinese and Japanese children's books in the Cotsen Children's Library at Princeton or the collection on the relocation of millions of Chinese youths to the country side during the Cultural Revolution being built by Nien-lin Xie, who was herself relocated, at Dartmouth College.

Both librarians and scholars will find kindred spirits here, meet scholar-librarians from a variety of backgrounds, some Asian, some European. Many came to their positions from other fields, referred to here as "second-career librarian," such as Mark Stephen Mir at the Ricci Institute whose previous experience was in industrial technology but whose skills were instrumental in building and enhancing the collection in its early days or Dr Ann Marie L. Davis, Japanese Studies Librarian at Ohio State, an historian whose research work in libraries and archives led her to accept what she felt to be broader scope as a librarian. Others came to librarianship as young PhDs who found careers in libraries and archives more rewarding than the uncertainties of a career in the teaching faculty. The librarians and archivists in this volume all display a love of what they are doing and can justly take pride in the collections they have preserved and built, and in the services that they provide to their users. Their collections are mostly research level, their clientele primary post-graduates and faculty, but they all engage with their entire community in building and promoting their collections.

Frederick Nesta
Honorary Associate Professor
Department of Information Studies, University College London



East Asian Librarianship and Library Collections in North America: Introduction

Hermina G.B. Anghelescu, Patrick Lo and Bradley Allard

East Asian Studies as Field of Research and Education

The modern states of East Asia consist of China, including Hong Kong and Macau, two small territories that are under Chinese sovereignty, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, and Taiwan. East Asian studies is a distinct multidisciplinary field of scholarly enquiry and education that promotes a broad understanding of East Asia's past and present. East Asian studies is part of the broader field of Asian studies, also an interdisciplinary field, that incorporates socio-political sciences and humanities. Research and education programs related to Asia, covering a wide range of topics and time periods, from ancient to modern history, language, literature, geography, religion, politics, socio-economic development, arts, and culture, have been hosted by many universities worldwide, including the United States and Canada, where East Asian languages and civilizations or cultures departments offer specializations in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.

The Cold War competition in the international sphere led the US government to support the development of area studies through the Title VI of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958¹ which was passed in response to the Soviet acceleration of the space race. The law provided federal funding to ensure trained manpower of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the national defense needs of the United States. Title VI of NDEA provided funding for language and “area studies” program activities ranging from undergraduate to advanced degree studies placed in all types of educational institutions. “NDEA heralded a major U.S. commitment to devoting new attention to the world beyond its borders – first to teach more of the uncommonly taught foreign languages, and then to learn in depth about the histories, societies, cultures and political systems of the key foreign powers” stated David Wiley (2001).²

¹Flemming, A. S. (1960). The philosophy and objectives of the National Defense Education Act. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 327, 132–138. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1033973>

²Wiley, D. (2001). Forty years of the Title VI and Fulbright-Hays International Education Programs: Building the nation's international expertise for a global future. In P. O'Meara, H. D. Mehlinger, and R. M. Newman (Eds.), *Changing perspectives on international education* (p. 13). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

With the political and economic rise of China, institutions of higher education in the United States have experienced a corresponding growth in interest toward East Asia in general, and China in particular. The interest in Chinese studies in the United States and Canada focused both on China's early history and on contemporary China, as a People's Republic, created the need for in-depth research in all fields (economy, trade, culture, education, and politics) that required acquisitions of books, papers, reports, and countless newspapers and periodicals that enabled scholars to investigate new trends in Chinese finances, business, banking, commerce, and the institutions and organizations engaged in these fields.

A Scholarly Review of Chinese Studies in North America (2013) consists of a collection of 21 essays that offer an overview of the paramount academic development and ever-growing scientific production on Chinese studies in North America (mainly in the United States with some references to Canada) in the last three decades were published in 2013 by the Association for Asian Studies (AAS). Leading scholars specialized in different domains of Chinese studies discuss current trends in academic research related to China.³ Libraries in the United States and Canada are engaged in supporting research and teaching East Asia-related topics with a wide range of print and digital resources, including movies, documentaries, monographs, periodical publications, newspapers, manuscripts, and rare books as well as web resources.

The above-mentioned volume is complemented by another one, also published by the AAS, which focuses on prominent library collections that support Asian studies research.⁴ The chapters of *Collecting Asia: East Asian Libraries in North America, 1868–2008* (2010) are authored by leading East Asia specialists, librarians, and scholars, who examine the development of 25 major East Asian libraries in the United States and Canada and the highlights of these collections. The volume also features the pioneers who helped shape these collections.

East Asian Library Collections in the United States and Canada

Tsuen-hsuei Tsien (1964,⁵ 1979⁶) traces the beginnings of the first major collections of East Asian language materials in American libraries. He states:

³Zhang, H., Xue, Z., Jiang, S., & Lugar, G. L. (2013). *A scholarly review of Chinese studies in North America*. Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Asian Studies. Retrieved from http://www.asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/A_Scholarly_Review_ePDF.pdf

⁴Zhou, P. X. (2010). *Collecting Asia: East Asian libraries in North America, 1868–2008*. Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Asian Studies. Table of Contents Retrieved from <https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/8587261>

⁵Tsien, T.-h. (1964–1965). First Chinese-American exchange of publications. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (25), 19–30.

⁶Tsien, T.-h. (1979). Trends in collection building for East Asian studies in American libraries. *College & Research Libraries*, 40(50), 405–415. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/2142/39905>

The first large acquisition of Oriental books by an American library occurred in 1869 when 933 Chinese volumes were “presented to the government of the U.S.A. by His Majesty the Emperor of China.” This was not exactly a gift but an exchange, which took some two years of negotiations and involved, at least three agencies of the U.S. government. The Smithsonian Institution initiated the exchange in 1867 when the Congress passed an act to provide fifty copies of U.S. government documents in exchange for official publications of other countries.

In subsequent years, several major gifts of materials in Chinese and other Asian languages were added to the Library of Congress. It was the Yale University Library that acquired the first Japanese materials in 1906, when a collection of some 9,000 volumes on Japanese literature, history, and institutions was added to its holdings (Tsien, 1979). On the West coast, “increasing business contacts with Asia necessitated some action by the University of California to supply needed training” states Tsien (1979). At the turn of the century, Columbia University added the first Chinese materials to its collections. In 1944, the University of Chicago purchased some 21,000 volumes for the Newberry Library and some 5,000 volumes for the Field Museum (1979). The New York Public Library and other major libraries in the United States also started adding Asian materials to their collections.

The interwar period witnessed the growth and systematic development of East Asian collections aimed at supporting the field of Asian studies in American universities (Wu, 1996).⁷ Private donors, institutions, and foundations such as Rockefeller and Carnegie became involved in supporting acquisitions of Asian materials to encourage study and research of oriental languages.

In 1926, McGill University in Montreal, Canada, received a gift of 75,000 volumes from a private donor. During this period museums in the United States and Canada started developing Asian art collections and their libraries started to incorporate books from this part of the world. The post-World War II period represented an era of rapid expansion “not only in the number of new collections but also in size and type of new acquisitions” (Tsien, 1979). Tsien (1971) states that

the year 1960 may be used as a benchmark for the development of East Asian collections in American libraries. The acquisitions made during the decade 1960–70 equaled the total number of volumes accumulated over the 100 years preceding 1960, and as many new collections have been established since then as those founded before that date.⁸

⁷Wu, E. W. (1996, October). *Organizing for East Asian studies in the United States: The origins of the Council on East Asian Libraries*. Association for Asian Studies. JEAL, Vol. 11. Retrieved from <https://www.eastasianlib.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/OriginsofCEAL.pdf>

⁸Tsien, T.-h. (1971). East Asian library resources in America: A new survey. *Association for Asian Studies Newsletter* (16), 1–11.

4 Inside Major East Asian Library Collections in North America

Major universities such as Harvard, Cornell, Princeton, Washington, Hawaii, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Toronto, and British Columbia introduced Asian studies academic programs supported by field-specific acquisitions.

“During the past hundred years or so, the growth of East Asian materials and the increase of the numbers of East Asian collections in the United States and Canada have been steady and at times phenomenal” states Thomas E. Lee in the Preface of his *Guide to East Asian Collections in North America*, the first of its kind, published in 1992.⁹ Lee makes reference to “milestone surveys” conducted by the Council on East Asian Libraries (CEAL) of the AAS, the professional organization representing East Asian libraries in North America. The CEAL data indicate that by 1975, there were about 6.7 million volumes in 93 collections. In 1980, the number of volumes reached about 7.9 million.¹⁰ A decade later, the survey reveals that the collections exceeded 10 million volumes.¹¹

The statistical data published in 2020, covering the period July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, reveal that on June 30, 2019, the 46 (out of a total of 48) reporting institutions (43 in the United States and 3 in Canada) harbored a total of 21,155,464 print volumes, 3,398,618 serial titles, a number of 112,217 “other materials” on top of 2,446,096 materials in a variety of formats, such as microforms, videos, DVSSs, scores, digital images, manuscripts, etc. Expenditures for access to electronic resources (computer files, electronic databases, and serial publications) amount to 3,373,143 USD. A number of 39 reporting institutions provide subscription-based access to 93,299,401 volumes in e-book format.

In addition to library holdings, the comprehensive statistical data compiled by Vickie Fu Doll from the University of Kansas and Wen-ling Liu from Indiana University, Bloomington, include fiscal data for acquisition of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and other East Asian materials, budgets for staffing, staff activities such as presentations, reference transactions, and interlibrary loan requests and borrowing requests processed. As of June 30, 2019, the 46 East Asian Libraries employed a staff consisting of a total full-time equivalent (FTE) employees of 409.69, with 171 FTE professionals, 146.36 FTE support staff, 68.63 FTE student assistants, and 23.27 FTE listed under the “other” category.¹²

The CEAL collects and processes statistical data on collections, expenditures, staffing, and user services on East Asian collections in American and Canadian libraries, published every year in the February issue of the *Journal of East Asian*

⁹Lee, T. E. (1992). *Guide to East Asian collections in North America*. New York, NY: Greenwood Press.

¹⁰Tsien, T.-h. (1982). *Current status of East Asian Collections in American libraries: 1979/1980 (Final Report)*. CEAL Statistics. Retrieved from <https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/11303>

¹¹CEAL. (1991). *Current status of East Asian collections in American Libraries: 1989/1990*. CEAL Statistics. Retrieved from <https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/11300>

¹²Doll, V. F., & Liu, W.-l. (2020). Council on East Asian Libraries statistics 2018–2019 for North American Institutions. *Journal of East Asian Libraries* (170), 8–26, Article 4. Retrieved from <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jéal/vol2020/iss170/4>

Libraries (JEAL).¹³ All historical and current data are available online in the CEAL Statistics Database hosted by the University of Kansas.¹⁴

The Library of Congress

The Asian Division of the Library of Congress harbors one of the largest collections of Asian materials outside of Asia, consisting of 4 million items encompassing approximately 200 languages and dialects from across the Asian continent. “These materials in print, manuscript, microform, and digital formats are organized into the following collections: Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Mongolian, South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Tibetan” mentions the Library’s website.¹⁵ Each collection is presented through individual research subject guides that highlight the holdings pertaining to each country or region.

As already mentioned, in 1869, the Library received a collection of 10 works in 933 volumes from Emperor Tongzhi of China.¹⁶ Nowadays, the Chinese collection has reached 1.2 million volumes.¹⁷ The Japanese collection was initiated in 1875 as an exchange of government publications between the United States and Japan. Today, the collection consists of 1.2 million monographs, serials, microform holdings, as well as rare books, watercolors, drawings, woodblock prints, and lithographs.¹⁸ The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 led to the establishment of the Korean collection which has become “the largest and most comprehensive outside of Asia.” The print collection consists of 445,000 volumes of monographs, over 8,600 serial titles, and 250 newspapers. In addition, the collection holds 5,600 reels of microfilmed materials.¹⁹

The Mongolian collection consists of approximately 10,350 monographs, 170 serial titles, over 3,900 microfiche, 168 microfilm reels, and 600 volumes of rare books. Since 1992 the Library has been actively acquiring publications from Mongolia, in both classical Mongolian script and Cyrillic.²⁰

¹³Council on East Asian Libraries (CEAL). Published statistics [1957 to date]. Retrieved from <https://ceal.ku.edu/citations>

¹⁴Council on East Asian Libraries Statistics Database. Retrieved from <https://ceal.ku.edu/>

¹⁵Asian collections at the Library of Congress: An overview—Introduction. Retrieved from <https://guides.loc.gov/asian-collections/introduction>

¹⁶Hu, S. C. (1979). *The development of the Chinese collection in the Library of Congress*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

¹⁷Asian collections at the Library of Congress: An overview—Chinese Collection. Retrieved from <https://guides.loc.gov/asian-collections/chinese-collection>

¹⁸Asian collections at the Library of Congress: An overview—Japanese Collection. Retrieved from <https://guides.loc.gov/asian-collections/japanese-collection>

¹⁹Asian collections at the Library of Congress: An overview—Korean Collection. Retrieved from <https://guides.loc.gov/asian-collections/korean-collection>

²⁰Asian collections at the Library of Congress: An overview—Mongolian Collection. Retrieved from <https://guides.loc.gov/asian-collections/mongolian-collection>

6 Inside Major East Asian Library Collections in North America

Table 1. Library of Congress Acquisition Budget for East Asian Collections, July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019.^a

	Monographs	Serials	Electronic	Other	Total
China	\$370,146	\$20,663	\$240,604	\$22,565	\$653,978
Japan	\$214,353	\$121,940	\$63,185	\$442,998	\$842,476
Korea	\$121,973	\$50,165	\$81,470	\$4,320	\$257,928
Total	\$706,472	\$192,768	\$385,259	\$469,883	\$1,754,382

^aDoll, V. F., & Liu, W.-l. (2020). Council on East Asian Libraries statistics 2018–2019 for North American institutions. *Journal of East Asian Libraries* (170), 8–26, Article 4. Retrieved from <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal/vol2020/iss170/4>

Table 2. Library of Congress Acquisition Budget for East Asian Collections, July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020.^a

	Monographs	Serials	Electronic	Other	Total
China	\$224,462.44	\$12,260.57	\$350,764.00	\$23,895.00	\$611,382.01
Japan	\$306,687.33	\$81,723.58	\$63,900.99	\$65,819.03	\$518,130.93
Korea	\$120,928.17	\$40,247.15	\$35,044.52	\$3,181.53	\$199,401.37
Total	\$652,077.94	\$134,231.30	\$449,709.51	\$92,895.56	\$1,328,914.31

^aDoll, V. F., & Liu, W.-l. (2021). Council on East Asian Libraries statistics 2019–2020 for North American institutions. *Journal of East Asian Libraries* (172), 32, Article 5. Retrieved from <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal/vol2021/iss172/5/>

All of these collections are open for research *in situ* by scholars and the general public. Subject-area specialists are available for research consultations on site and online.

During the fiscal year July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019, the Library of Congress acquisition budget for East Asian materials amounted to 1,754,382 USD spent as detailed in [Table 1](#).

During the fiscal year July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020, a COVID-19 pandemic year, the Library of Congress continued its acquisition activity, but less items were available on the market because the publishing industry was also affected by the worldwide pandemic. The amount spent on acquisitions is not the result of a budget cut. It is mostly due to a less abundant offer in the book trade during the global shut down ([Table 2](#)).

The Library of Congress's collections have grown so steadily that as of June 30, 2020, the holdings of East Asian materials totaled 3,100,850 volumes, consisting of: 1,287,253 volumes in Chinese, 1,258,672 volumes in Japanese, 337,175 volumes in Korean, and 217,750 volumes in other East Asian languages.²¹

²¹Doll and Liu (2021).

From July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, the Library of Congress employed the highest number of subject-area professional librarians in North America, amounting to a total of 32.75 FTE, consisting of 13.59 FTE for the Chinese language, 10.88 FTE for Japanese, and 8.28 FTE for Korean. The Library's support staff for its East Asian collection amounted to a total of 14.82 FTE and 1 FTE student assistant,²² making it the largest team of subject-area specialists in Asian Studies working within the same division. Despite repeated efforts to secure an interview with a representative from the Asian Division of the Library of Congress our emails have remained unanswered. We would have welcomed first-hand accounts from those in charge of one of the most significant East Asian collections in North America.

East Asian Digital Collections

Digitization projects are costly and time consuming. They are made possible through competitive grants from various institutions and organizations. Associated costs related to preservation and curation of digital archives are also significant. Digital collections provide access to a wealth of selected primary source documents, manuscripts, early prints, maps, unique and rare items, old periodicals, oral histories, etc. Instant online access to digital repositories makes scholars' research easier and faster to complete. Travel restrictions imposed during the global COVID-19 pandemic made in-person library visits impossible. However, digital libraries have remained open and have received high usage regardless of physical barriers.

Libraries engage in all types of digitization projects to make their collections widely accessible online. Subject-area librarians collaborate with digital librarians to identify resources for digital projects. They become responsible for identifying relevant materials to be digitized, for coordinating digitization efforts, for organizing digital information, and for preserving electronic collections. They are expected to provide domain expertise in support of the library's digital scholarship services. Subject-area librarians engage in outreach efforts to promote digital collections and to ensure interactive user engagement with the library's digital content.

East Asian library holdings are rich in books, manuscripts, historical maps, albums of models of calligraphy, inscriptions on all kinds of media, block prints, scrolls, and rare and unique artifacts. Outstanding East Asian digital collections at major universities in the United States have been digitized and made available to the general public via the internet. East Asian collections of historical images present searchable visual archives that stand for valuable resources available to researchers.

It is not only the remote historical past that constitutes digital resources. Data from contemporary social media sites have been harvested to enable research on current

²²Doll, V. F., & Liu, W.-l. (2020). Council on East Asian Libraries statistics 2018–2019 for North American institutions. *Journal of East Asian Libraries* (170), 8–26, Article 4. Retrieved from <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jéal/vol2020/iss170/4>

social issues, such as the Chinese Anti-Corruption Campaign and Social Media Web Archiving Project, a joint collaborative project funded by a Mellon innovation grant, where three university libraries have contributed effort and expertise. Johns Hopkins University Library²³ (the host institution), George Washington University Library, and Georgetown University Library built two digital collections. The online exhibit for the Tibet Oral History Project²⁴ at the Stanford University Libraries consists of 300 interviews conducted over a decade (2007–2017) with elderly Tibetan refugees who fled Tibet to avoid Chinese persecution. Interviews were filmed with interpreters present, and all interviews were subsequently transcribed in English.

The Yale Silk Road²⁵ is a database containing 11,000 images of major sites in the Silk Road region taken during site seminars by faculty from the Art History department at Yale University Library. The collection serves as a multidisciplinary resource with relevance to students and faculty working in the fields of art and archaeology, religious studies, history, East Asian languages and literatures, and Central Asian and Islamic studies. The Princeton University Library's East Asian Library²⁶ maintains several digital projects, ranging from Chinese COVID-19 political propaganda posters to Chinese shadow figures database, from Japanese game boards to Japanese picture books and prints.

Brown University Library offers access to digitized photographs that document the 1923 earthquake in Japan²⁷ Columbia University Library features digitized Chinese rare books and other special materials.²⁸ Cornell University Library, where over one million of its eight million books are in Asian languages, focuses on Japanese woodblock prints and Early US–Korea Diplomatic Relations, an image database featuring photographs and painted sketches dating 1904 and 1905.²⁹ Harvard's rich collections of digitized materials range from Chinese gazeteers to oversized rare books, from Mongolian rare books to Japanese art and design.³⁰ An international multiinstitutional collaborative project enabled the digitization of Chinese women's literature during the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) periods, with contributing libraries from several East Asian countries, the United

²³Johns Hopkins University Library – East Asian Studies: Retrieved from <https://guides.library.jhu.edu/east-asia/digital-collections>

²⁴Stanford University Libraries – The Tibet Oral History Project. Retrieved from <https://exhibits.stanford.edu/tohp>

²⁵Yale University Library – Yale Silk Road. Retrieved from <https://web.library.yale.edu/digital-collections/yale-silk-road>

²⁶Princeton University Library – East Asian Library. Retrieved from <https://guides.library.duke.edu/ivypluseastasia/Princeton>

²⁷Brown University Library – Great Kanto Earthquake. Retrieved from https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/collections/id_563/

²⁸Columbia University Library – Chinese Rare Books & Special Collections. Retrieved from <https://library.columbia.edu/libraries/eastasian/chinese/rarepecial.html>

²⁹Cornell University Library – Early US–Korea Diplomatic Relations. Retrieved from <https://rmc.library.cornell.edu/Straight/>

³⁰Harvard University–Yenching Library – Digitization Projects. Retrieved from <https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/yenchinglib/galleries>