

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE EAST ASIAN LIBRARY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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The East Asian Library at the University of Minnesota opened its door to the public in October 1965. At that time it had 18,650 volumes, and was staffed with one professional librarian, one consultant, one senior clerk, and one student assistant. It had its own room with its own point of Reference and Circulation Services and operated as a separate unit in the main library building. One may wonder how this tiny collection could be equipped, staffed, and organized in such a fashion that fit a much large library. What made the organization possible and why is the collection size still as slim as 144,760 volumes in 2006? What has happened to the library? This paper is written to address these questions by tracing the history of its establishment, development, and collections. The materials used in this study are primarily archival materials, unpublished manuscripts, and personal interviews.

The Establishment

Setting up a specialized library unit within a well-established university library system is challenging. It takes good planning to define a proper managerial form for the unit, procedures and regulations to operate the unit, qualified staff to manage the unit, adequate funding for collection development, fitting method of services, and cataloging schema to organize and process the materials. Only an individual who is both a scholar and an experienced librarian could do such planning. Luckily, that was what happened to the University of Minnesota Library system before there was a unit known as East Asian Library.

A library to support the East Asian academic program was something that Richard Mather wanted since he joined the University of Minnesota (**UM**) in 1949. Born in Baoding (保定), China in a missionary family in 1913, he had the early education at home with his mother and at the North China American School in the Tong County (通縣). In 1927, when he was 14, he was sent back to the United States to continue his education. After he was graduated from Princeton University with a degree in Chinese Art and Archaeology, he continued his

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graduate studies in Oriental Language and Literature at University of California at Berkeley.² In 1949, he came to the University of Minnesota, started offering courses in Chinese language and literature in the Department of East Asian Language and Literature which he helped established. In addition, he also offered Chinese Art in the Art Department and Chinese History in the History Department. These works kept him busy for 15 years.³ During these years, lack of library support for the programs seriously impeded the progress of the program, so he wanted to do something about it.

In 1963, when Chun-Jo Liu (劉君若) came as an Associate Visiting Professor to take Richard Mather's place during his sabbatical in Japan for a year, she was frustrated with the gloomy situation of the Chinese and Japanese books. After working as Assistant Professor at Stanford University and Associate Professor at University of British Columbia in Canada, she, too, was aware of the serious lack in library support. At that time, the collection was only about 18,000 volumes, mostly Chinese and some Japanese books, stored in a small room on the third floor of Walter Library, the main library building of the University of Minnesota Libraries. The books were loosely organized in a traditional Chinese classification system known as Siku or "Four-treasure" system, including boxes that were not yet open.⁴ These books were mostly from the personal library of Diether von den Steinen of Berlin, a former professor of UC Berkeley that the UM Library system purchased in 1952, in addition to books purchased at faculties' requests over the years. Mather reviewed the collection and tried to figure out what to do to get them organized, so Liu suggested to Mather "why don't you invite Kaiming Chiu?"⁵ whom Liu came to know and respect when she was a Research Fellow at Harvard University between 1959 and 1960.

Dr. Alfred Kaiming Chiu was born in a modest merchant's family in the town of Zhenhai (鎮海) in Zhejiang (浙江) in 1868, acquired his elementary education in a village clan school run by his relatives where he acquired traditional Chinese learning. He was then sent to be an apprentice in a bookstore in Hankou (漢口), where he acquired a taste for books and learned the rudiments of economics and essentials of business management. After 1911, he was sent to study Western learning in a missionary school in Changsha, from where he continued his study at Boone College (文華書院) and enrolled in the first class of six students of the very first Library School in China. In the summers he worked as an apprentice librarian in the great Han Fen Lou (涵芬樓). After he was graduated from Boone Library School (文華圖書科) in 1922, he became the first librarian of Amoy University (廈門大學). In fall of 1924 he was sent by Amoy University to study library science at the Library School of the New York Public Library. A year later,

² Interview with Richard Mather, June 29, 2007

³ Richard Mather. *Random Recollections of the History of Asian Languages and Literatures at the University of Minnesota*. Unpublished manuscript, 2002 p. 1.

⁴ Interview with Chun-Jo Liu, June 20, 2007.

⁵ "Recollections of Dr. Chiu, VIII" by Richard Mather, *Committee on East Asian Libraries Bulletin*, March 1978, number 55, pp. 10-11

he entered the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, majoring in Economics. In 1927 he was invited by the College Librarian to organize the Chinese and Japanese books in the College Library, which later became the famous Harvard-Yenching Library.⁶ His education in both traditional Chinese and Western learning and his practical experiences in the bookstore and libraries created a very unique combination that enabled him to contribute to East Asian librarianship and Chinese American libraries and earn a high reputation in the field. He organized the Harvard-Yenching Institute Library in 1927, devised a classification scheme for Chinese and Japanese books (a system that was adopted by 25 libraries world-wide),⁷ and trained many young librarians, and helped develop a group of competent Chinese American librarians.⁸ After working at Harvard-Yenching Library for near 40 years, Chiu retired in June 1965. This was the time when he received an invitation letter from Richard Mather. Although Mather was “never for a minute dreaming that he would accept... He accepted...invitation with enthusiasm.”⁹

Encouraged by Chiu’s acceptance to organize the library for East Asian studies, Mather persuaded Donald Smith, the Vice President of the University and University Librarian Edward Stanford that the ideal curator to care for the collection would be Dr. Kaiming Chiu.¹⁰ He further successfully convinced an All-University Asian Areas Studies Committee that the first priority of the Ford Foundation grant should be spent on the curator for a unit to be organized.¹¹ Less than a month from the initial invitation, an offer to Chiu was extended by the Vice President, “...we offer him a full time appointment as Visiting Professor in 1965-66.... Dr. Chiu would work full time in the first year, and that a change to a part time appointment in the second year...” In the same memo, the administrators decided to invite the young librarian Paul P.W. Cheng in England to work with Chiu, at Chiu’s suggestion.¹² Richard Mather delivered the offer in person to Chiu who was in St. Francisco.

Budgetary matters were also planned for the collection; a total of \$24,000 was allocated to cover staff salaries of two professional librarians, one senior clerk, one student assistant, equipment, supplies, and the book budget from November 1, 1965 to June 30, 1966. The budget for the following year was \$32,700 for a full fiscal year July 1966 through June 1967. All those plans were financed by the Ford Foundation Grant of \$1,250,000. The grant was critical to

⁶ *Selected Works of Alfred Kaiming Chiu in Library Science*. Edited by Cheng Huanwen. Guilin: Guangxi Shi fan da xue chu ban she, 2003. p.3-11.

⁷ *Selected Works of Alfred Kaiming Chiu in Library Science*. Edited by Cheng Huanwen. Guilin: Guangxi Shi fan da xue chu ban she, 2003. p.19-21.

⁸ William Sheh Wong. Alfred Kaiming Chiu and Chinese American Librarianship. *College & Research Libraries* September 1978, vol. 39, Issue 5, pp. 384-385.

⁹ “Recollections of Dr. Chiu, VIII” by Richard Mather, *Committee on East Asian Libraries Bulletin*, March 1978, number 55, pp. 10-11

¹⁰ Richard Mather’ letter to Vice President Donald Smith, February 19, 1965. University Archives, Collection: Libraries: East Asian, Folder 1 (UACLEAF1)

¹¹ Minutes of All-University Asian Areas Studies Committee, March 8, 1965. UACLEAF1.

¹² Memo from Donald K. Smith to Dean Ziebarth about Professor Chiu. March 31, 1965. UACLEAF1.

establishing the library, extending the invitation to Chiu, and recruiting several more faculty for the East Asian and related programs.¹³

As soon as Chiu arrived in Minneapolis in September 1965, a meeting of library and college staff members to address the Chinese and Japanese books and services was held on the 20th. At this meeting, all of major issues were discussed and settled.

Regarding the name for the unit, Chiu suggested "East Asian Library" would properly describe a collection of Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Mongolian materials and would conform to current scholarly usage. This initial decision implied that all titles in the languages would be pulled out of the general collection and moved to the new East Asian Library. As to the physical location for the unit, Chiu strongly suggested the library should be a separate unit with a separate room to house its collection. This decision was not without contest. Later some library officials "were attempting to subordinate the East Asian Collection...Dr. Chiu patiently and cheerfully convinced them... that the collection had to maintain certain autonomy as a separate East Asian Library, with its own librarian and staff."¹⁴ Another concern was how to engage faculty members and get their input for collection building. Chiu shared his Harvard experiences and suggested setting up an Advisory Committee for East Asian Library to work closely with the unit. Although the Dewey system was used throughout the Minnesota library system; Chiu suggested using the Harvard-Yenching classification system, which was used by 25 libraries around the world at that time.¹⁵ As to the shelving, Chiu suggested shelving Chinese and Japanese books together by subjects, but not with English books. Planners sought the best answers to two questions: what practices would enable users or library staff to find what they wanted? How would Chinese and Japanese books be described in the cataloging cards? Chiu recommended adopting the Harvard practice to romanize all titles with Wade-Giles system for Chinese and Hepburn system for Japanese.¹⁶

In addition, a set of procedures were written in great detail and implemented. The procedures covered ordering, accessioning, cataloging (including original cataloging, subject assignment, description guidelines, and rulebooks to use), shelving and filling, treatment of serials, binding and inventory procedures.¹⁷ The document was so thoroughly and comprehensively prepared for the unit that almost nothing was left unmentioned. For example, the journals in the East Asian Library are shelved by call numbers, not alphabetical by title like the rest of the

¹³ Memorandum. Budgeting for Oriental Collections, University Libraries. April 8, 1965. UACLEAF1.

¹⁴ "Recollections of Dr. Chiu, VIII" by Richard Mather, *Committee on East Asian Libraries Bulletin*, March 1978, number 55, pp. 11

¹⁵ *Selected Works of Alfred Kaiming Chiu in Library Science*. Edited by Cheng Huanwen. Guilin: Guangxi Shi fan da xue chu ban she, 2003. p. 19.

¹⁶ Minutes of Meeting of Library and college staff members on the Chinese and Japanese book collection. September 20, 1965. UACLEAF1.

¹⁷ Processing Procedures used in East Asian Library, University of Minnesota Library, December 1965. UACLEAF1.

Library system. In this document, Chiu wrote “Current issues of selected serial are out in display cases in the Reading Room and the rest are shelved according to their call numbers in the stacks.”¹⁸ Another example is binding. Western journals have to be trimmed when binding, but “No East Asian serial volumes should be trimmed in new binding or rebound volumes.”¹⁹ Today, these practices are still in place, carried out as daily routines.

The coming of Dr. Chiu and his work at the UM Libraries were notable for the University and the Twin Cities. The University of Minnesota News Services interviewed Dr. Chiu for a long article entitled “Harvard Professor A. K. Chiu—Renowned Chinese Librarian Cataloging ‘U’ Asian Collection,” it starts:

“One of the world’s leading authorities in Japanese and Chinese library work is spending this year at the University of Minnesota’s East Asian Library, cataloging the existing collection and helping plan its growth so that it may become one of the better such libraries in the Midwest. The expert is A. Kaiming Chiu, Harvard professor emeritus and retired head of Harvard University’s Oriental library.” The newspaper enthusiastically reported Chiu’s vision for the unit, “Minnesota has a good opportunity to develop its East Asian Library because there is little competition in this region, between Seattle and Chicago, there is almost nothing in the field.”²⁰

The next day, the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, one of two major newspapers of Minnesota, featured Chiu and University Libraries’ new unit. The article “U Busy Building Asian Library” reported Chiu’s high hope and optimism for the unit. “The university...hopes to have 100,000 volumes in the East Asian Library by 1968. By doubling the number of volumes each year for the next two years the university can have the library ready for students by the time a doctoral degree in Asian studies can be earned,” Prof. Chiu said.²¹

Later in June 1966, the *Minneapolis Tribune*, another major newspaper of the State featured a story of the “Oldest Book in ‘U’ Library: Discovered by Catalogers” with two photos printed along with the story.²² (see figure 1)

¹⁸ Processing Procedures used in East Asian Library, University of Minnesota Library, December 1965. UACLEAF1.

¹⁹ Processing Procedures used in East Asian Library, University of Minnesota Library, December 1965. UACLEAF1.

²⁰ “Harvard Professor A. K. Chiu—Renowned Chinese Librarian Cataloging ‘U’ Asian Collection.” University of Minnesota News Service, January 25th, 1966. UACLEAF1.

²¹ “U Busy Building Asian Library” by John Schweitzer, *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, Wednesday, January 26, 1966.

²² “Oldest Book in ‘U’ Library Discovered by Catalogers” by Bob Lundegaard, *Minneapolis Tribune*, Monday, June 20th, 1966.

Oldest Book in 'U' Library Discovered by Cataloguers

By **BOB LUNDEGAARD**
Minneapolis Tribune Staff Writer

Two Chinese scholars cataloguing the University of Minnesota's East Asian library have discovered the oldest printed book in the university's library.

The block-print book, printed in 1415, is "Hsing li ta Ch'uan," a compendium of neo-Confucian philosophy. It antedates the Gutenberg Bible by 41 years.

It was discovered by Dr. A. K'aiming Chiu, retired head of the Harvard-Yenching Institute, and Paul Cheng, an assistant at Harvard who will be in charge of the East Asian collection at Minnesota.

"EVEN Harvard doesn't have this edition," said Chiu. He said it was required reading for all candidates in the Chinese classical examination until 1906.

The 32-volume work was purchased by the university from the estate of California Prof. Diether von den Steinen in 1952, but its value had gone unrecognized, said Cheng. He declined to set a dollar value on the work.

Chiu and Cheng have spent the past year in a third-floor office of Walter Library patiently organizing, binding and cataloguing the university's Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans volumes, which have risen from 18,000 to 29,000 since September.

Armed with a \$25,000 grant 40 years at the Harvard-Yenching Institute from the Ford Foundation, they hope to increase the collection to 100,000 volumes by 1970.

They have been using a standard cataloguing system devised by Chiu during his ching Institute.

In September Chiu will become librarian of the Chinese



Minneapolis Tribune Photos by Dwight Miller

DR. A. K'AIMING CHIU HELD OLDEST BOOK
Behind him were other volumes in collection

Figure 1. Photo of Chiu and the oldest book found in the UM East Asian Library
Minneapolis Tribune, June 20th, 1966

Clearly, Chiu had a plan, a big and ambitious plan, for this new East Asian Library. The modest beginnings of this little unit did not prevent Chiu from thinking grandly, comprehensively, and yet in detail for its future development. His vision set a course for this unit that would place it among the top eleven East Asian Libraries in the country, so long as his plan was carried out and realized.

The Development

As soon as the initial planning and organizing of the unit was completed, Chiu and Paul Cheng worked hard to increase the collection from its 18,650 volumes to a targeted level of 100,000 volumes in three years.

To develop a library unit, collection building is central, and Chiu's guiding principle for building collections was to build a "working collection" with adequate volumes, so that the unit could fulfill its library mission to support the programs. He did that at Harvard-Yenching Library, and he wanted to do the same for the Minnesota. In his view "the aim of the library has been to provide a working collection of books for research in sinology. Works are required not for the purpose of making a collection of antiques, but to assemble a working and active research library."²³ This belief was probably the very reason that he did not purchase the Gest Chinese Research Library housed at McGill University at the time. Mr. Gest, the owner of the collection, approached Chiu in 1935.²⁴ The asking price was one dollar per volume, cheaper than purchasing retrospective materials price of \$2 dollars per volume.²⁵ The collection he intended to build would be a working collection for teaching and research, but the collection had to have adequate volumes. Quickly reaching 100,000 volumes was critical to Chiu. Chiu's planned to reach this goal in three years, but that is not what the University Librarian Stanford had in mind, and this is where their different views collided.

The first attempt to quickly increase the collection was made in February 1966, when Chiu requested an additional \$150,000 dollars for retrospective materials²⁶ and additional four full-time staff position to process the materials.²⁷ Disappointingly, the plan was not supported fully by the library administrators and that concerned faculty members very much. They collectively wrote a letter to the Associate University Librarian Hopp strongly urging him giving more funding for acquisitions, more staff to the library, and bigger space to house the growing

²³ *Selected Works of Alfred Kaiming Chiu in Library Science*. Edited by Cheng Huanwen. Guilin: Guangxi Shi fan da xue chu ban she, 2003, p.398.

²⁴ Su Chen and Juming Zhao, "Gest Chinese Resarch Library at McGill University 1926-1936," *East Asian Library Journals*, Autumn 2004, Vol. 11, no.2 pp.77-80

²⁵ Minutes of the Second Meeting of East Asian Library Advisory Committee, January 20, 1966. UACLEAF2.

²⁶ Stanford's letter to Donald Smith Vice President for Academic Administration, February 15, 1966. UACLEAF2

²⁷ Paul Cheng's request for Personnel 1966-1967 to Mr. Richard Bernard, Chief, Special Collection. December 20, 1965. UACLEAF2.

collections²⁸. The support to the East Asian Library, however, remained unchanged, while the East Asian program on campus had grown from a single department focusing mainly on language to inter-departmental and inter-disciplinary initiatives in Anthropology, Art History, Geography, History, Music, and Political Science.²⁹ (see table 1)

Table 1. The State of East Asian Programs at the University of Minnesota in 1966/67

Faculty Members	
East Asian Language	5 Chinese staff
	5 Japanese staff
	3 Assistantship
Anthropology	1 East Asian specialist
Art History	1 East Asian specialist
Geography	1 East Asian specialist
History	1 Chinese historian
	1 Japanese historian
Music	1 Oriental musicologist
Political Science	2 East Asian specialists
Total	21 faculty
Advanced Degrees Awarded between 1960-66	
M.A.	30
Ph.D.	16
Total	46 students graduated
1966-67 enrolled students for East Asian related courses	
Undergraduate	448
Graduate	161
Total	609 students

Source: *East Asian Library Development Plan, Appendix VI. 1968*

Two years later, in 1968, another attempt to build the collection quickly was planned.³⁰ This plan was even more ambitious than the first one. It was a three-year plan to bring the collection up to 100,000 volumes by 1969 or 1970. The requested one-time funding was \$1,029,200 dollars, \$724,200 for materials, \$232,706 for 12 additional full-time staff, and \$72,200 for equipment and supplies.

²⁸ Faculty members' letter to Dr. Hopp, December 20, 1967. UACLEAF2.

²⁹ East Asian Library Development Plan, Appendix VI: Description of the East Asian Language and Area Program, 1966-67; prepared by E. M. Copeland, Chairman, Department of East and South Asian Language, University of Minnesota. UACLEAF2.

³⁰ East Asian Library Development Plan, January 1968. UACLEAF2.

The goal of this attempt again was to position the unit as one of the best eleven East Asian Libraries in the nation.³¹

The library administrators reacted defensively to this plan. University Librarian Stanford wrote a long letter to the Vice President William Shepherd with harsh criticism of the plan. He criticized the East Asian Library Advisory Committee as representing this same vested interest, so the group could hardly be expected to consider the proposal in relation to other library needs. He said only he and the Associate Director Dr. Hopp could evaluate the proposal objectively. He then questioned the validity of 100,000 volumes and the plan to reach this figure within three years; he believed that collections of quality could rarely be developed “overnight.” He further pointed out that the East Asian Library was already being given more attention than the University Library could afford; he pointed out that growing from almost nothing in 1965 to 37,738 volumes in 1967 was not a bad record. He was particularly upset at the request for 12 additional staff (10 professional and 2 clerical) and by “the bland assumption that the University Library would take up the funding” of these additional 12 people by the end of the three year period.³²

Chiu may have previously encountered criticism similar to the University Librarian’s statement that “collections of quality can rarely be developed overnight. During the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*’ interview in 1966, Chiu said that “it is important to realize that more people speak the Asian languages than speak English and that there is a vast amount of literature published in those languages.”³³ In other words, a vast amount of quality literature on various subjects has been produced in China since early times. In 1960s, Taiwan and Japan reprinted many such materials and provided excellent opportunity to acquire them. Unfortunately the library administrators probably had no idea of the state of Chinese literature and that may have played a role in their decision.

Faculty members were aware of the University Librarian’s intense reaction toward the proposal. Professor Robert Poor, East Asian art historian, did not accept his criticism and questioning. Poor pointed out that Wisconsin and Illinois were not among the top 11 East Asian Libraries, but they had added 35,000 and 20,000 volumes respectively from 1965 to 1967 and the book budget for Illinois was \$65,000 and Wisconsin was \$45,000, and \$18,580 at Minnesota for 1967/68 was far from adequate.³⁴ Faculty members did not agree with the University Librarian’s arguments and assessment, and

³¹ The best 11 East Asian Libraries Chiu referred were: Library of Congress, Harvard, California (Berkeley), Columbia, Princeton, Chicago, Michigan, Hawaii, Hoover, Yale, Washington (Seattle) and their collection size were ranging from 831,585 volumes to 105,963 volumes. Cited from “A Request for A Non-Recurring Grant-in-Aid for the Development of East Asian Library Resources at the University of Minnesota, February 1966.” UACLEAF2

³² Stanford’s letter to Dr. William Shepherd, Vice President for Academic Administration, February 13, 1968. UACLEAF3.

³³ “U Busy Building Asian Library” by John Schweitzer, *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, Wednesday, January 26, 1966.

³⁴ Robert Poor’s report The State of the East Asian Library in Relation to the Development Plan of 1968. November 20, 1969.

believed the goal set by Chiu was achievable only if the University Libraries shared Chiu's vision. Wisconsin and Illinois had proved that Chiu's goal of reaching 100,000 volumes was actually a modest one.

One might assume that Chiu created the plan for the unit out of his own imagination. On the contrary, he knew where the UM Libraries stood among top research libraries at that time, and his plan for making the unit one of the top eleven East Asian Libraries was valid—he knew that the UM Library system was a strong and nationally respected library system and could afford such a new initiative. (see table 2) Data (table 1) showed the growth of the East Asian programs; the needs of library support grew as well.

Table 2. The State of the University of Minnesota Libraries in 1968/69.

Total Holdings	2,805,040 volumes
Volumes added	121,334
Ranking	11 th among 76 research universities
Personnel	137 professional 141 non-professional 144 student assistance (FTE)
Total Salaries & Wages	\$2,398,542
Total Books & Binding	\$1,299,576
Other Operating Expenditures	\$123,062
Total Operating Expenditures	\$3,821,180
Grand Total	\$7,642,360

Source: *Academic Library Statistics 1968/69*. Published by the Association of Research Libraries.

Stanford is seen by many librarians and library staff as a leader with vision and a spirit of entrepreneurship. During his administration, he raised federal, state funding, drawn university resources for the library collection development, and started several subject libraries³⁵, and the East Asian Library was started during his administration.³⁶ What were reasons he did not support the development plans? One can speculate.

Perhaps the University Librarian took the population of the state into the consideration. According to 1970 U.S. Census data, the total population of Minnesota was 3,805,000 (urban population was 2,526,000 and rural 1,279,000), of which 3,736,000 were white, 34,868 were African American, Japanese 2,739, Chinese 1,973, Korean 1,050, Indian 22,369 and Filipino 1,325.³⁷ In other words, 98% of the total population was white and the population of Chinese, Japanese,

³⁵ Interview with Professor Bernard Karon, Library Coordinator, who started work in the University Libraries in 1965. July 5th, 2007.

³⁶ Edward B. Stanford. *History of University of Minnesota Libraries*. Reprinted from *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*, Volume 18, pages 155-176, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1976.

³⁷ *1970 Census of Population: vol. 1: Characteristics of the Population, Part 25: Minnesota*. Issued January 1973. US Department of Commerce. p. 25-68, 503-506.

and Korean all together were 5,762, which was less than 0.15% of the total population. Under such social and cultural circumstances, and with the University of Minnesota (a land-grant university) largely dependent on state funding for its operation and the only research institution in the state, the University Librarian might have had reservations about supporting Chiu's plans for the East Asian Library.

Building a new library unit is a challenging task, because "there is the matter of new territory to be covered. Here the evidence is dim and we must hark to the twittering of birds and observe the pattern of tea leaves in order to identify subjects of investigation new to us, so that a reasonable amount of anticipatory collecting can be done. In this, as a Columbia professor recently remarked, 'prevision and enterprise are indispensable.'" ³⁸ As a matter of fact, all good academic libraries "have been built with vision, ambitions, knowledge, education, and large amounts of money."³⁹ It would be very difficult to build a great library if library administrators lacked of vision, knowledge, and money.

Setting up a specialized library unit requires good planning and organization, and advancing the unit requires competent staff, adequate funding, and support from the university and library administrations. Fortunately, during the initial establishment, the East Asian Library was enthusiastically supported. The support, however, was short-lived and since that time,- the unit developed at a slower pace, adding on average about 3,200 volumes annually.

The Collections

Despite the disappointment of unsupported development plans, the collection building was carried out diligently through purchasing, gifts and exchanges by East Asian librarians who served for the unit since 1965. They are:

1965-1967	A. Kaiming Chiu
1965-1970	Paul P.W. Cheng
1971-1978	William Sheh Wong
1978-1987	Richard T. Wang
1991-1998	Yuan Zhou
2001-	Su Chen

Between 1965 and 1970, the library purchased many reprinted Cong shu (叢書) and serials titles published in the Minguo (民國 Republic 1912-1949) era, made available by the publishers in Taiwan and Japan. These purchases enabled the

³⁸ Arthur Hamlin. *The University Library in the United States: Its Origins and Development*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1981, p. 99-100.

³⁹ Arthur Hamlin. p.96.

unit to build some basic and essential collections on Chinese studies. Many of these same edition reprints are also held by the Chinese University of Hong Kong libraries where Dr. Chiu also built the library for that new university.⁴⁰

The lack of adequate funding encouraged East Asian Librarians to actively seek other channels to obtain materials. One method was to purchase duplicates being disposed of by the large East Asian libraries. Since this very an inexpensive way to increase the collection size, the University Librarian wholehearted supported it, and actively wrote letters to the directors of East Asian Libraries at Harvard-Yenching, University of Chicago, University of British Columbia, University of Michigan, Washington University in St Louis, and Yale University.⁴¹ Another method was seeking gifts from both institutions and individuals. Today the Asian Library at University of Hawaii and Asian Library at University of British Columbia support the unit by sending duplicates to the UM East Asian Library as gifts; their continued assistance enriches the library collection in many ways. The unit also maintains active publication exchange programs with Taiwan National Center Library, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Library, Fudan University Library, and Huazhong University of Sciences and Technology Library for mutual benefit.

The Ming collection, a gem in the East Asian Library, started with Professor Romeyn Taylor, a Ming historian who joined the University in 1960. In 1968 Professor Edward Farmer, a Ming historian, and in 1987 another Ming historian, Ann Waltner, joined the University and formed a very strong faculty team in Chinese History within the Department of History. The library responded actively, directed limited resources on the building the collection, and diligently collected materials in print and microfilm to support the program. For example, the *Da Ming Jiu Qin shi li an li* (大明九卿事例案例 Official legal cases of Great Ming) is the only microfilm copy held in North America; its original manuscript is held by a library in Japan. After many years of development, the collection of Ming studies, particularly in Ming history became a distinguished collection within the East Asian Library, and the good collection in turn promoted the faculty collective effort in compiling an important reference book entitled *Ming History: An Introductory Guide to Research* 明史研究指南, which is still a widely used standard reference book for Ming studies.

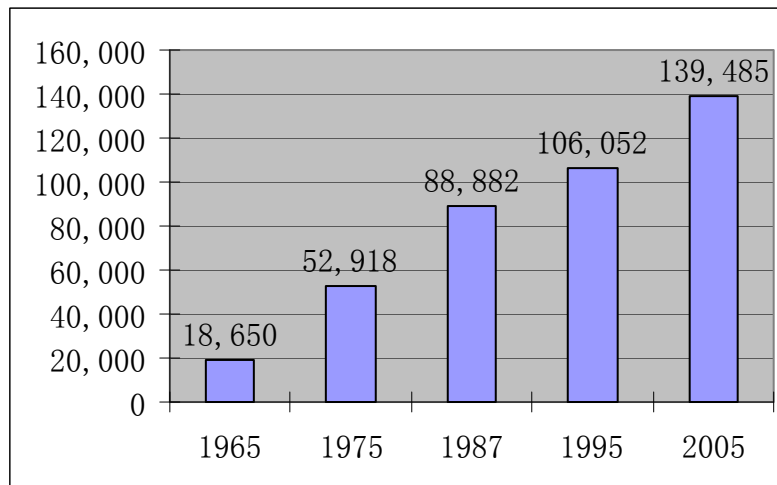
After 41 years development, the collection has grown from its 18,650 volumes in September 1965 to the current holdings of 144,765 volumes (see chart 1), of which 105,322 are Chinese, 36,626 are Japanese, 2,417 are Korean, and 400 are non-CJK materials. Current serial subscriptions are 1,283 titles, and the unit holds eight electronic Chinese and Japanese databases. The total holdings rank the UM East Asian Library 27th among the 55 East Asian libraries in the North

⁴⁰ Searched the Online Catalog of the Chinese University of Hong Kong Libraries, June 20, 2007.

⁴¹ Memo from Paul Cheng to Associate University Librarian Dr. Hopp, June 23, 1966. UACLEAF1.

America according to 2005/06 Statistics of East Asian Libraries in North America.⁴²

Chart 1. Growth of UM East Asian Library collections



Sources: Committee on East Asian Libraries bulletin, Statistics of East Asian Libraries.
Note: No statistical data for 1985/86 was found in the bulletin and data for 1987/88 is used.

As collection size increased, subject coverage widened, reflecting the evolving of programs in recent years. Collections on education, gender studies, media history, Japanese theater, and cinema studies have grown rapidly. The strengths of collection, however, lay in literature, Ming history, Mingguo history, art history, religion, and general reference for Chinese studies, and in modern/contemporary literatures, history, and social sciences for Japanese studies.

Small as the collection is, it contains a handful old and rare books of Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) editions. Those books are from private libraries purchased prior to the establishment of the unit. They will be described below in Classics, History, Philosophy, and Literature, four categories conforming to Chinese tradition.

In the field of Classics, the Thirteen Classics with commentaries in Confucian Classics are essential, and the library always tried to have the best editions possible. The East Asian Library holds five titles printed by the most famous collector, printer and publisher of the Ming dynasty, Mao Jin Jiguge (毛氏汲古閣) between 1628 and 1640.⁴³ A page from one of these titles is shown in figure 2.

⁴² Council on East Asian Libraries Statistics Database <http://www.lib.ku.edu/ceal/> Accessed on June 22, 2007.

⁴³ 曹之, *中國古籍版本學*. 武漢大學出版社, 1992. p.288-290.

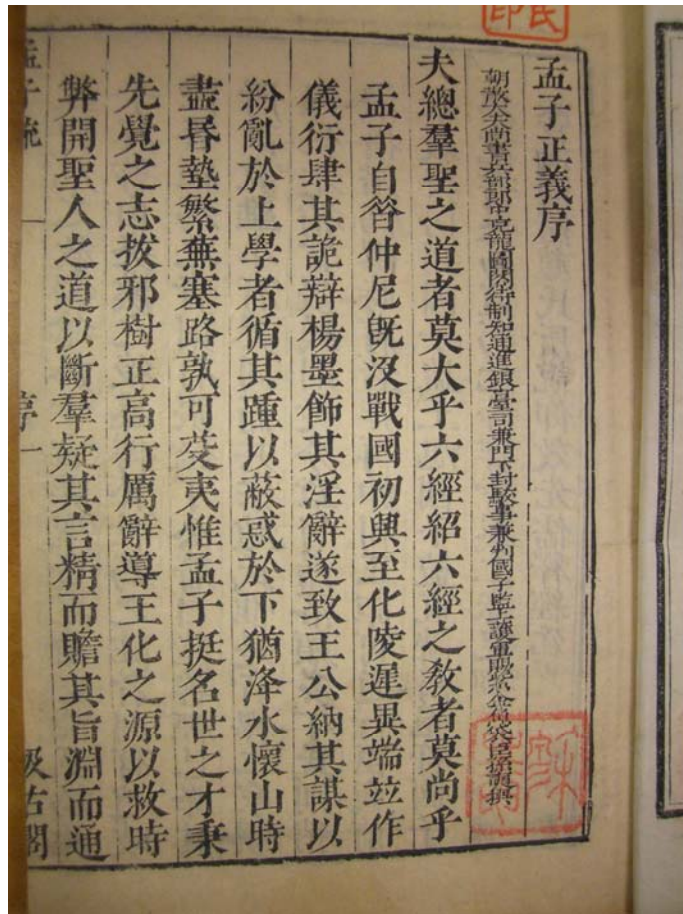


Figure 2. *Meng Zi zhu shu* printed by Mao Jin Jiguge in 1633

In the field of History, the Twenty-one Dynastic Histories is an absolutely essential and indispensable collection for East Asian libraries. The unit holds 16 titles of Nanjin Guozijian edition (南京國子監刊本), the Nanjing Imperial Academy, the highest academic institution and a center of official printing and publishing, well-known by its famous scholars and great collection of printing blocks collected from the previous dynasties.⁴⁴ The unit holds the 16 titles printed in Jiajin (嘉靖), Wanli (萬曆) and Tianqi (天啓) reigns, complimented nicely by Song Shi (宋史) from Chenghua reign (成化), and four other titles printed by the famous private printers Mao Jin (毛晉 1599-1659), the foremost famous collector and printer of Ming dynasty, Zang Maoxun (藏懋循), a famous Huzhou Fu (湖州府) compiler, printer and publisher known by his high quality compiling, editing and printing of important Chinese literature and drama works,⁴⁵ and Zhong Renjie (鍾人傑). Together, these items comprise a set of good Ming edition Twenty-one Dynastic Histories. These also make the UM East Asian Library the holder of the most Nanjian (南監) edition books in North American. (see table 3 and figure 3)

⁴⁴曹之, 明代南監刻書攷 in *中國出版史料: 古代部分*. 宋原放, 王有朋輯注. 湖北教育出版社, 2003. p.589.

⁴⁵繆咏禾. *明代出版史稿*. 江苏人民出版社, 2000. p.92-93.

Table 3. The Twenty-One Dynastic Histories⁴⁶

Title	Printer
史記一百三十卷	南監
漢書一百卷	鍾人傑
季漢書六十卷正論一卷	臧懋循
三國志六十五卷	南監
晉書一百三十卷	毛晉
南史八十卷	南監
北史一百卷	
北齊書五十卷	
梁書五十六卷	
陳書三十六卷	
周書五十卷	
隋書八十五卷	
唐書二百二十五卷	毛晉
五代史記七十四卷	南監
魏書一百十四卷	
南齊書五十九卷	
宋書一百卷	
遼史一百一十六卷	
金史一百三十五卷	兩廣巡撫朱英
宋史四百九十六卷	
元史二百一十卷	南監

⁴⁶ For details on which titles printed in which reign by Guozijian, see 曹之, 明代南監刻書攷 in *中國出版史料: 古代部分*: 宋原放, 王有朋輯注. 湖北教育出版社, 2003. p.582-591.

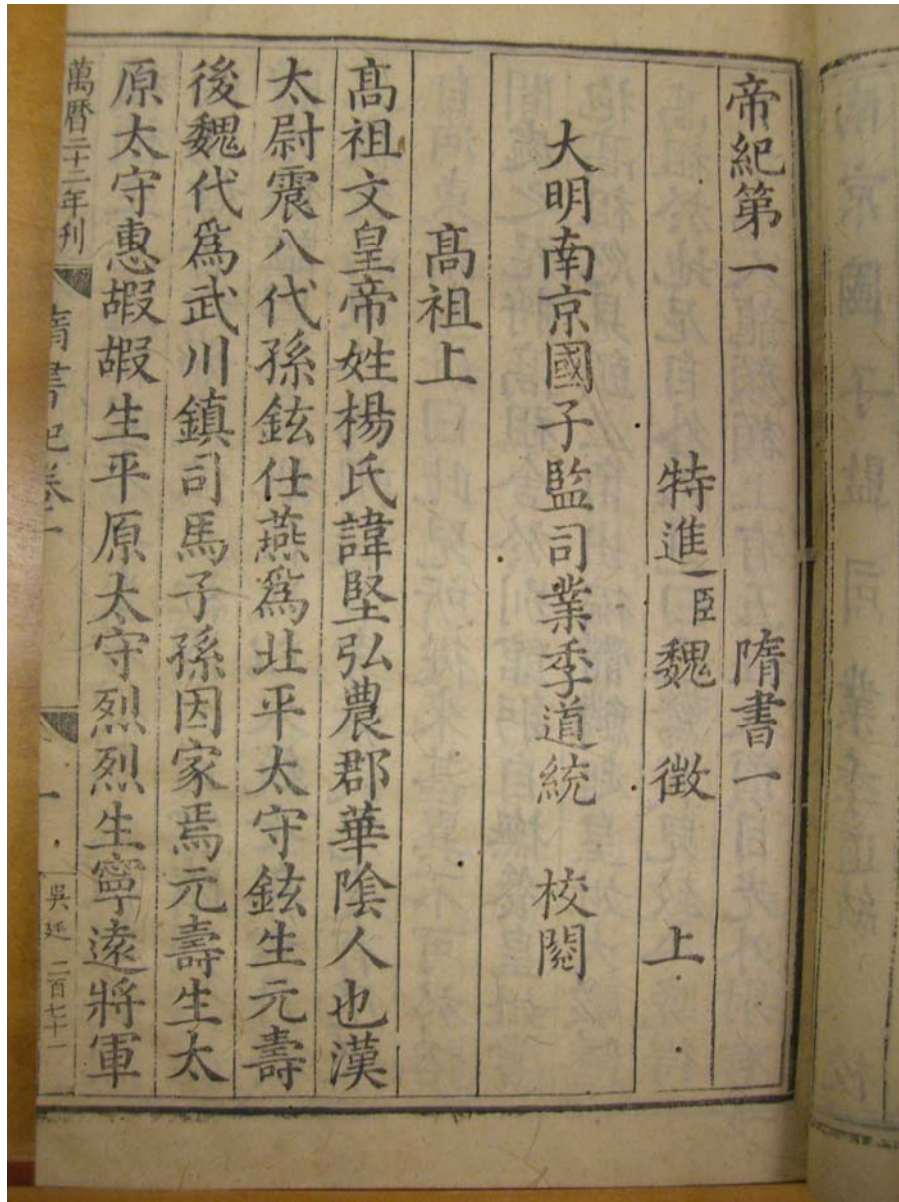


Figure 3. *Sui Shu* printed by the Nanjing Guozijian in 1598

In the filed of Philosophy, one title is worth mentioning that is *Xin ke Xing li da quan shu* (新刻性理大全書 New edition Anthology of Philosophical works) compiled by Hu Guang (胡廣) printed by famous Huizhou (徽州) commercial printer Wu Mianxue(吳勉學) in 1603, his printed work known by its high quality of editing and printing, desired by the collectors at that time, and only a few of his works survived today.⁴⁷ (see figure 4)

⁴⁷ 周心慧, 明代版刻述略 in *中國出版史料: 古代部分*: 宋原放, 王有朋輯注. 湖北教育出版社, 2003. p. 532.

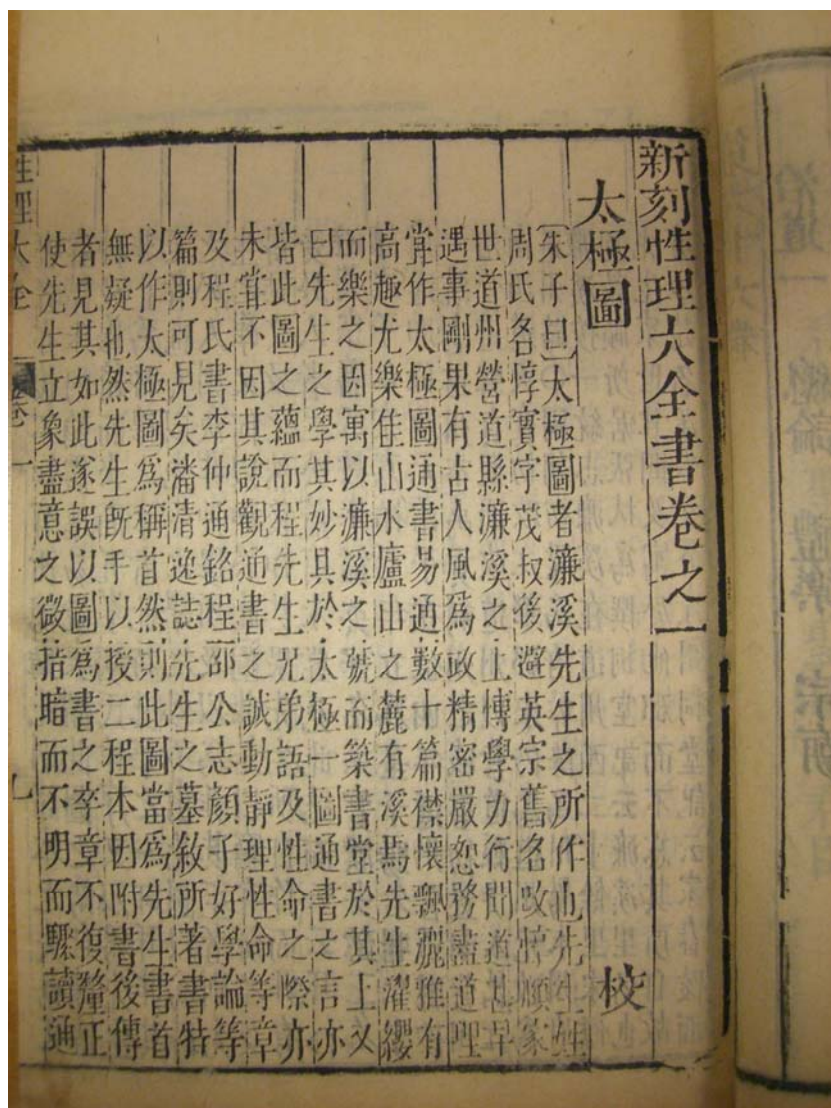


Figure 4. *Xin ke Xing li da quan shu* printed by Wu Mianxue in 1603

In the field of Literature, four titles by famous private and commercial printers are worth mentioning. *Han Wei shi cheng* (漢魏詩乘 Anthology of poems from Han and Wei Dynasties) compiled and printed by Mei Dingzuo (梅鼎祚) in 1583. Another title is *Ji qian jia zhu Du Gongbu shi ji* (集千家註杜工部詩集 Poetical works of Du Fu with commentaries) compiled by Gao Chufang (高楚芳) and printed in 1602 by the famous scholar and printer Xu Zichang 許自昌 in 1602. *Wei Wudi ji* (魏武帝集 Collected literary works by the first Emperor of the Wei Kingdom) edited by Zhang Xie (張燮) and block printed in 1621-1628. (see figure 5). This is one of *Seventy-two Literary Works* (七十二家集) of Han and Wei authors assembled in a collection compiled by Zhang Xie. Another title is *Chu ci zhu* (楚辭集註 Collected commentaries on Chu poems) compiled and printed by Wu Tang Ting Yu Zai (吳堂聽雨齋) in 1788.

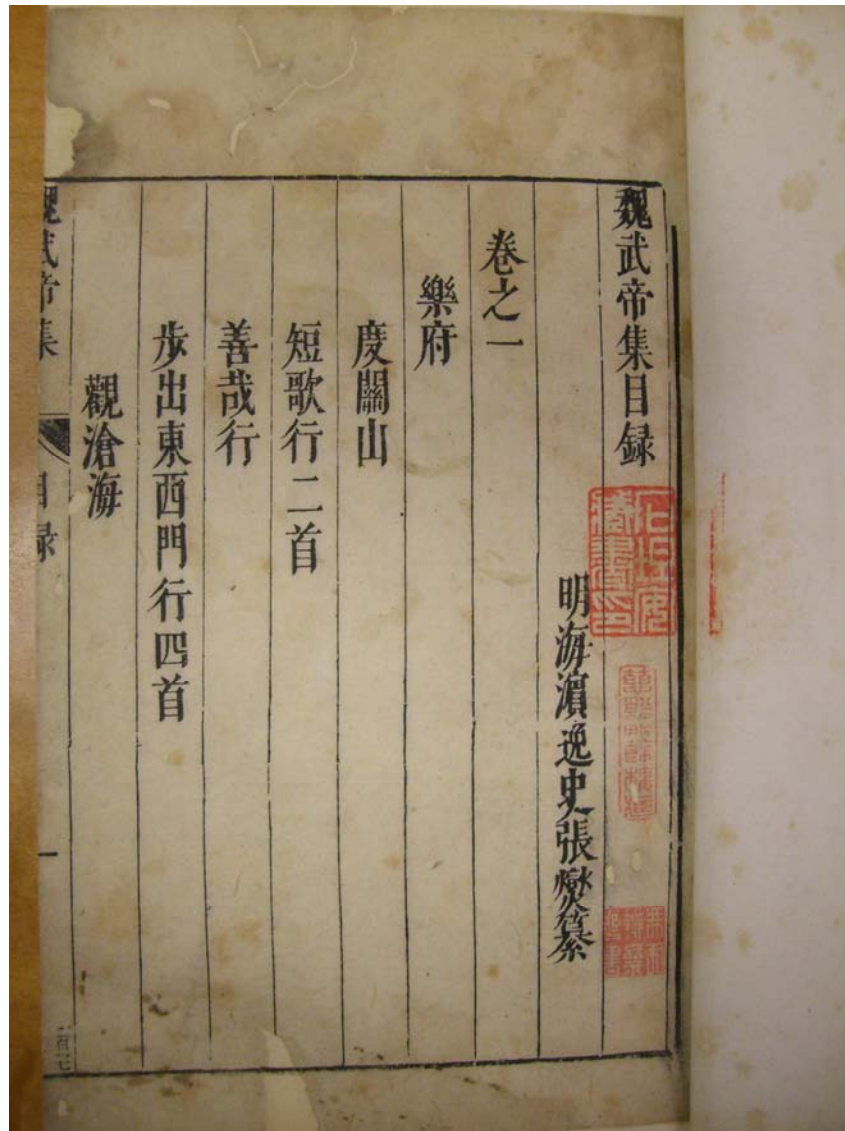


Figure 5. *Wei Wudi ji* compiled and printed by Zhang Xie between 1621-1628

The Ming dynasty is the golden age of Chinese printing and publishing. In comparison with previous dynasties, its social, economic, and political conditions resulted in a flourishing of compiling, editing, printing, publishing and distribution of printed works. Various printed works done by the central government printing house like Nanjian, noble families, private printers, and commercial printing houses, the large amount of literature produced, and the breadth of subject coverage surpassed any previous dynasties combined. Ming printing not only preserved vast amounts of ancient literature but also produced many new forms of literature, like popular novels, dramas, illustrated manuals, etc.⁴⁸ The books held by the East Asian Library include works produced by central government

⁴⁸ 周心慧. p.581.

printers, private printers, and commercial printers. These provide indispensable tangible materials for studying Ming's printing culture, characteristics of official printing and private printing, and the printing techniques used by printers from different regions. They also enable an examination and evaluation of a particular title's editions. They offer a window to probe the social customs, economic conditions, and intellectual life of the Ming dynasty.

Summary

Looking back at the history and the path that the East Asian Library has taken through for the past 41 years, one can summarize and suggest a few points to share with those who are thinking of starting a new specialized library unit.

First, it is quite evident that there are great advantages to invite an experienced librarian to organize a new unit. A librarian with hands-on experiences as well as in depth knowledge of the field brings a very valuable advantage because an unnecessary learning curve in a new unit can be avoided. In addition, a well-planned and well-organized unit can begin functioning effectively and efficiently in a much short period of time and faculty and students can be served immediately.

Second, a specialized unit should be staffed with specialized library staff who regards the unit highly. Often that high regard and dedicated attention is not shared by the colleagues in parent organization, particularly true for medium- to small-sized East Asian libraries. The majority learn to strive for the best and make necessary compromise to always help to build a favorable and a positive collaborative environment for the unit's long term sustainable development. Taking uncompromising stands or inflexible positions can easily have negative consequences that in turn would hinder and delay the development for the unit. We have seen this in the case of the Gest Chinese Research Library at the McGill University.⁴⁹ Although the East Asian Library at Minnesota was not in the very same situation, it does resemble the McGill case in some ways.

Third, a primary goal that librarians must work hard to fulfill is meeting the needs of academic programs. As Edelman and Tatum expressed, "it has always been the scholar who provided the impetus, the librarian has made it possible."⁵⁰ Proactively catching the "impetus" and making it happen by stretching even a limited book budget and providing research support can do magic. Ming collection at the Minnesota has set a great example.

After all, "good scholars need good libraries, and good libraries attract good scholars."⁵¹ Building a good collection is one of great contributions a library can

⁴⁹ Su Chen and Juming Zhao, "Gest Chinese Research Library at McGill University 1926-1936" *East Asian Library Journals*, Autumn 2004, Vol. 11, no.2, pp.40-100.

⁵⁰ Arthur Hamlin. p.96.

⁵¹ Arthur Hamlin. p.96.

make in the academic world. Chinese has a proverb that expresses a similar idea: “The family having parasol trees attracts phoenixes.” (家有梧桐樹, 引得鳳凰來). Building a good collection is like planting parasol trees--phoenixes, birds, and other unexpected visitors will come when the planted trees mature.