The Chinese Rare Book Digital Collections at the Library of Congress

Asian Division, Library of Congress
Agenda

• Asian Division Overview
• Chinese Rare Book Digital Collections
• Q&A
Asian Division

- The Asian Division curates and serves the largest Asian collection outside of Asia: 4.4 million physical items in 197 Asian vernacular languages and dialects – including both general and rare/special collections, covering East, Southeast and South Asia, and one of the most comprehensive Asian-language digital collections in North America.

- The Asian Division works with Overseas Field Offices and the Asian & Middle Eastern Division (ASME) to acquire and process materials, and with the Preservation Directorate to manage and preserve collection items.
Asian Reading Room

- This is where users can access Asian analog collections, reference collections and electronic resources (accessible on LC campus), and get help from reference librarians who have language expertise and are subject specialists for the geographical areas they cover.

- One of the 4 international collection reading rooms: African & Middle Eastern, Asian, Hispanic, European
Asian Reading Room
Thomas Jefferson Bldg., LJ-150

Monday-Friday,
8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
(Appointments required for using rare collections)
New Asian Reading Room site: https://www.loc.gov/research-centers/asian/

Using the Asian Reading Room:
https://www.loc.gov/research-centers/asian/about-this-research-center/using-the-reading-room/
Asian Collections

- Chinese
- Japanese
- Korean
- Mongolian
- South Asian
- Southeast Asian
- Tibetan
- Asian American Pacific Islander Collection

Miao fa lian hua jing : qi juan 妙法蓮華經：七卷 /
## Size of Asian Collections

### AD Collection at the end of FY2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Monograph</th>
<th>Journals Issues</th>
<th>Journals Titles</th>
<th>Inactive Journals</th>
<th>Microfilm</th>
<th>Microfiche</th>
<th>Monographs and Journal Issues</th>
<th>Microforms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1,221,504</td>
<td>219,835</td>
<td>6,104</td>
<td>10,826</td>
<td>22,946</td>
<td>4,649</td>
<td>1,441,339</td>
<td>27,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1,237,137</td>
<td>142,992</td>
<td>8039</td>
<td>9,451</td>
<td>15,478</td>
<td>21,867</td>
<td>1,380,129</td>
<td>37,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>339,952</td>
<td>115,622</td>
<td>2367</td>
<td>5,598</td>
<td>5,308</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>455,574</td>
<td>5,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>13,280</td>
<td>4005</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>3,919</td>
<td>17,285</td>
<td>4,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>375,904</td>
<td>218,861</td>
<td>1601</td>
<td>2,120</td>
<td>20,174</td>
<td>337,258</td>
<td>594,765</td>
<td>357,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asia</td>
<td>293,419</td>
<td>178,928</td>
<td>2736</td>
<td>8,462</td>
<td>15,001</td>
<td>187,778</td>
<td>472,347</td>
<td>202,779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibet</td>
<td>18,688</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>14,763</td>
<td>19,455</td>
<td>15,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>3,499,884</td>
<td>881,010</td>
<td>20,984</td>
<td>36,593</td>
<td>79,940</td>
<td>570,579</td>
<td>438,0894</td>
<td>650,519</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LC Overseas Operations

Library of Congress Overseas Offices - Acquisition and Cataloging Areas

The Library of Congress maintains six overseas offices (Nairobi, Cairo, Jakarta, Islamabad, Rio de Janeiro, and New Delhi) that support the acquisition and cataloging of materials from around the world. The overseas offices acquire and catalog materials from the countries shown in the map below. Library of Congress staff in Washington, DC are responsible for acquisitions from countries outside of the regions served by the overseas offices.

Map showing locations of overseas offices:
- Cairo Office
  - Algeria
  - Northern Cyprus
  - Bahrain
  - Oman
  - Egypt
  - Qatar
  - Greece
  - Saudi Arabia
  - Iraq
  - Sudan
  - Jordan
  - Syria
  - Kuwait
  - Tunisia
  - Lebanon
  - Turkey
  - Libya
  - United Arab Emirates
  - Mauritania
  - West Bank
  - Morocco
  - Yemen
- Islamabad Office
  - Afghanistan
  - Iran
  - Pakistan
- New Delhi Office
  - Bangladesh
  - Bhutan
  - India
  - Maldives
  - Nepal
  - Sri Lanka
- Nairobi Office
  - Angola
  - Botswana
  - Burundi
  - Cameroon
  - Central African Republic
  - Congo (Kinshasa)
  - Djibouti
  - Eritrea
  - Ethiopia
  - Gabon
  - Ghana
  - Kenya
  - Lesotho
  - Madagascar
  - Malawi
  - Mauritania
  - Mauritius
  - Mozambique
  - Namibia
  - Rwanda
  - Senegal
  - Seychelles
  - Somalia
  - South Sudan
  - Swaziland
  - Tanzania
  - The Gambia
  - Tunisia
  - Turkey
  - Uganda
  - Zambia
  - Zimbabwe

Map credits:
- Library of Congress, US Department of State, Natural Earth
- PROJECTION: Winkel Tripel (NGS World)

Map description:
- Scale: 2,000 Miles
- Date: Oct 2010
- Congressional Cartography Program

Library of Congress Logo:

ASIAN DIVISION
Asian Collections in Other Divisions

- Geography and Map Division (G&M)
- Law Library
- Main reading room
- Manuscript Division (MSS)
- Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division (MBRS)
- Music Division
- Prints and Photographs Division (P&P)

Reading rooms and research centers: https://loc.gov/rr/
The Chinese Collection

Greetings of the Chinese to the Americans

The Chinese Herbal and Materia Medica (A 1655 edition)

Gamble Collection
Chinese collection started in 1869: 10 gift titles in 905 volumes from Emperor Tongzhi

Important acquisitions:
- 1879: Caleb Cushing Collection (237 titles in 2,500 volumes in Chinese, Manchu and Mongolian)
- 1901-1915: Rockhill Collection (6,000 volumes in Chinese, Manchu and Mongolian)
- 1904: Louisiana Purchase Exposition gift from the Chinese government (198 titles in 1,965 volumes)
- 1913-1915: Hing Kwai Fung 冯景桂 acquisition (17,208 volumes)
- 1915-1920: Jiang Kang-hu 江亢虎 acquisition (2,000 volumes of local gazetteers)
- 1915-1927: Dr. Walter T. Swingle acquisition (68,000 volumes, mostly local gazetteers)
- 1928: Wang Shu-nan book collection (1,644 titles in 22,100 volumes)
- 1934: Arthur Hummel acquisition (7,721 volumes, local gazetteers and manuscript maps)
- 1937: Joseph Rock acquisition (1,070 local gazetteers)
- 1938: Gamble Collection (493 volumes of Christian publications donated by the Gamble family)

Has grown to over 1.4 million items (monographs and journals) from 100,000 volumes when the Asian Division was established in 1928
The Asian Division has a collection of 5,300 Chinese rare books. Nearly 2,000 titles were selected and digitized to form the Chinese Rare Book Digital Collection (https://www.loc.gov/collections/chinese-rare-books/about-this-collection/) that was released in 2019.

Majority are editions from the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and early Qing dynasty (1644-1795), while nearly 30 titles are Song dynasty (960-1279) and Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) editions.

Digitized in collaboration with the National Central Library of Taiwan and available from NCL portal.

Rich resources on various topics in the study of pre-modern China, including local history, geography, politics, social and economic life, education, agriculture, and biology.
The Yongle da dian 永樂大典 (https://www.loc.gov/collections/yongle-da-dian/about-this-collection/), or Yongle Encyclopedia, was one of the most extensive attempts in world history to capture the entirety of human knowledge in book form, incorporating content from earlier books.

Compiled between 1403 and 1408 under an edict of the third emperor of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Di, known by the reign name of Yongle 永樂 (r. 1402-1424).

Contains 22,937 sections (juan 卷), bound together into a total of 11,095 volumes (ce 册).

Only 420 volumes of the duplicate copy produced in the 16th century are known to exist, distributed among more than 30 library and private collections around the world.

The Library of Congress holds 41 unique, inconsecutive volumes, acquired during the early 20th century via purchase and donation, which is the largest assemblage of Yongle specimens in a collection outside Asia.
Digitizing Yongle da dian

- Digitized in-house by the Library of Congress
- Involves close collaboration with multiple LOC teams:
  - Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access catalogers to create full bibliographic records for 41 volumes
  - Conservation Division to evaluate, treat and rehouse all 41 volumes
  - Digital Collections Management & Services Division to work through the digital content assembly workflow – proposal development, concept review, feasibility assessment, digitization and assembly for web presentation
  - 36 volumes online as of today
  - New Digital Scan Center opened in June 2021, scanning resumed after a long pause due to the pandemic
The Naxi Manuscript Collection

Featured Content

NZS, Road the Gods decide = Naxi Zu xiang xing wen jing dian. ...
NZC, Sacrifices to the Serpent King = Naxi Zu xiang xing wen ...
NZO, Naxi Pictographic Art = Naxi Zu xiang xing wen jing dian. ...
NZA, Sacrifices to Heaven = Naxi Zu xiang xing wen jing dian. ...
NZO, Naxi Pictographic Art = Naxi Zu xiang xing wen jing dian. ...
The Naxi Manuscript Collection

- The Naxi Manuscript Collection ([https://www.loc.gov/collections/naxi-manuscripts/about-this-collection/](https://www.loc.gov/collections/naxi-manuscripts/about-this-collection/)) includes an initial release of more than 180 items out of its collection of 2,780 Naxi (Nashi) manuscripts and one funeral scroll.
- This collection is the largest outside of China and is considered the finest in the world.
- Naxi features the world’s only living pictographic writing system; these manuscripts were produced by practicing Naxi priests, called *dongbas*, with a simplified pictographic system and were used for standard ceremonies such as funerals and blessings.
- Acquired from Joseph Rock (1884-1962) during the 1920s and 1930s; 1,073 items were acquired from Quentin Roosevelt II in 1941.
- Organized and described by Zhu Baotian of Yunnan Provincial Museum in 1998.
- Digitized via Global Gateway, a collaborative digital libraries project hosted at the Library of Congress; migrated to loc.gov after its sunset.
- The rest of the collection will go through LOC internal workflow to get digitized.
What's next?

大般涅槃經. 巻三十七
六朝寫經殘卷
王樹枬書藏

https://lccn.loc.gov/2011457367
北魏寫本佛經殘頁
https://lccn.loc.gov/2016500604
勝天王般若波羅蜜多經. 卷四
https://lccn.loc.gov/2016500607
Thank You!

- Ask-a-Librarian: https://ask.loc.gov/asia

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