
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

Asian Reading Room

Thomas Jefferson Bldg., LJ-150

Monday-Friday,
8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
(Appointments required for using
rare collections)

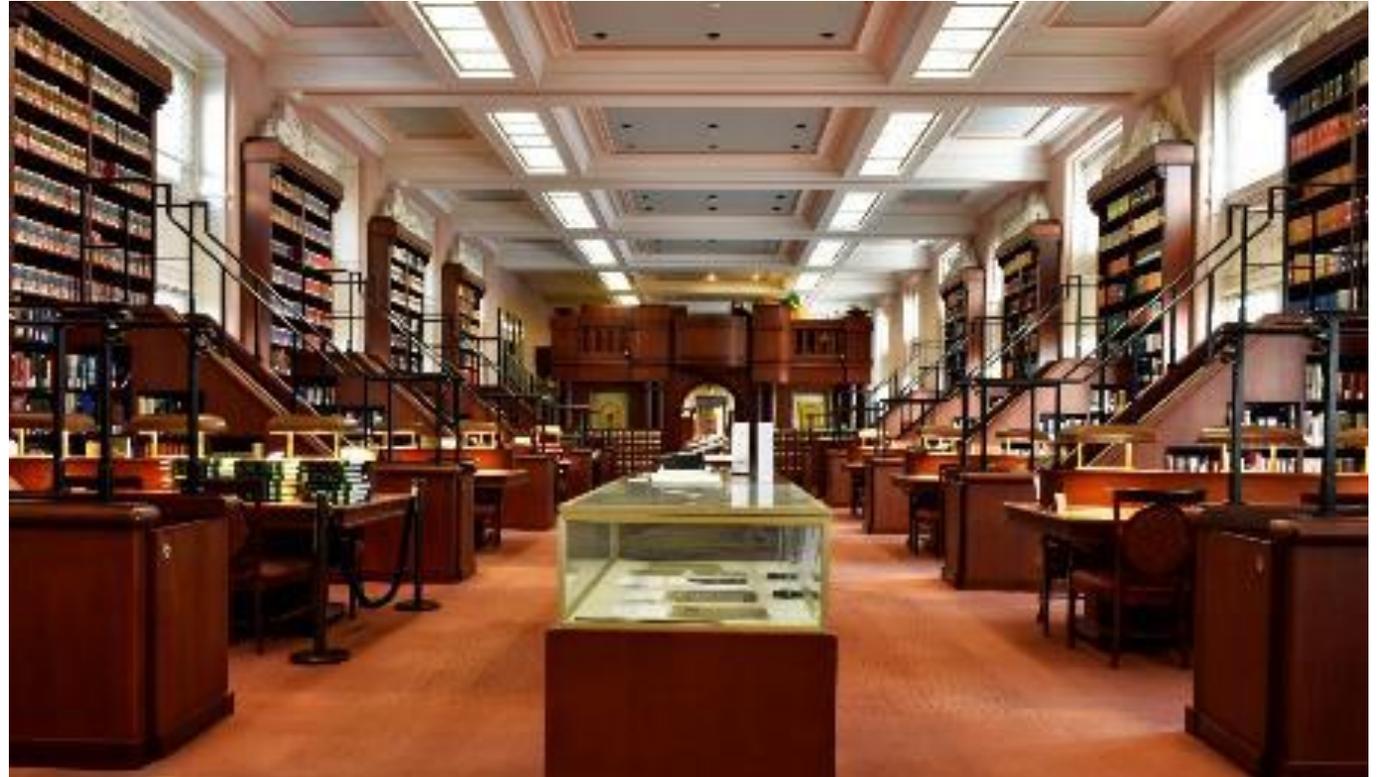


Photo of Asian Reading Room

RESEARCH CENTER
Asian Reading Room

About this Reading Room Collections Researcher Resources News & Events

About this Reading Room

Using the Reading Room

Location & Contact Information

Fellowship Information

Public Hours

Monday through Friday

8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Closed Saturdays, Sundays & [Federal Holidays](#)

Location

10 First Street, SE

Thomas Jefferson Building, LJ 150

Washington, DC 20540-4810

[View map](#)

About this Reading Room



Located on the first floor of the Thomas Jefferson Building, the Asian Reading Room is where the public and scholars alike may freely access more than 4 million physical items that make up the Asian [Back to top](#)

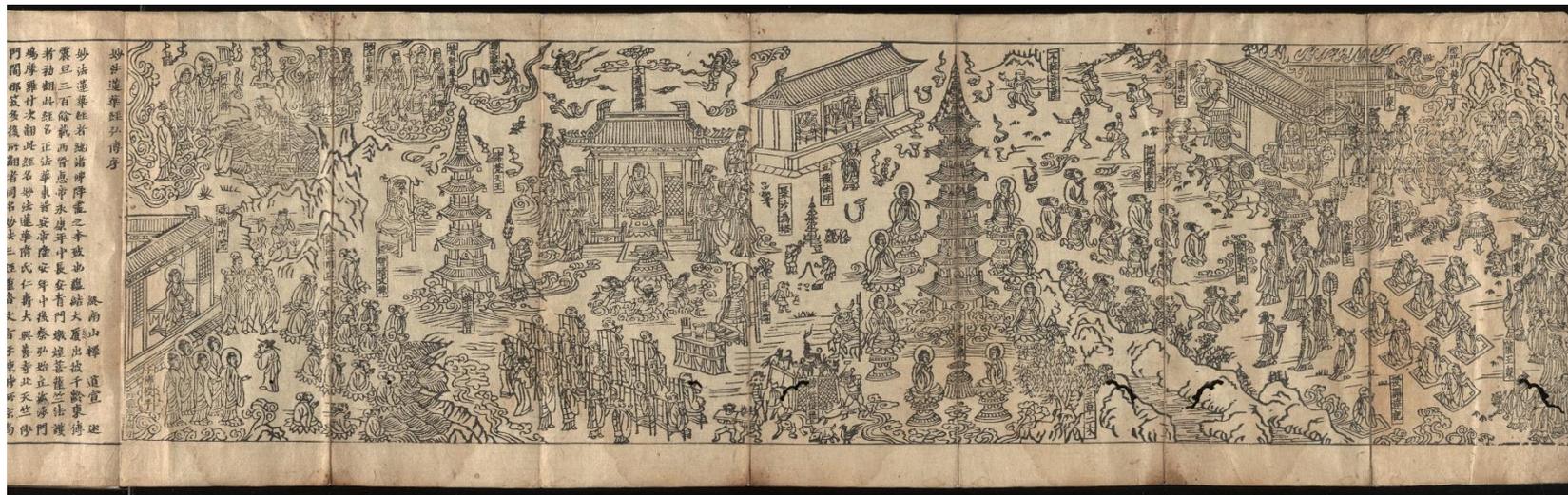
New Asian Reading Room

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



Miao fa lian hua jing : qi juan 妙法蓮華經：七卷 /

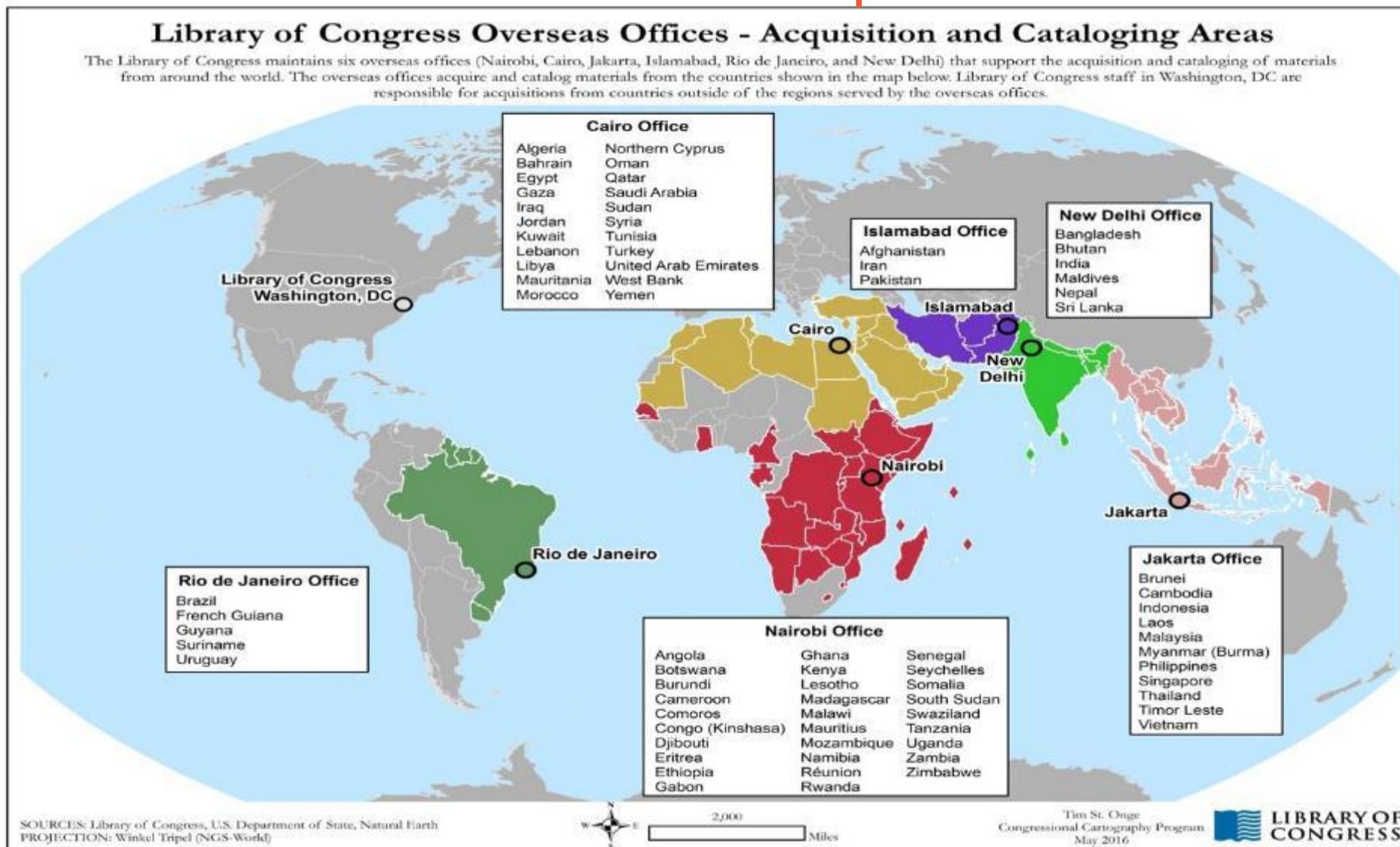
- Chinese
- Japanese
- Korean
- Mongolian
- South Asian
- Southeast Asian
- Tibetan
- Asian American Pacific Islander Collection

Size of Asian Collections

AD Collection at the end of FY2021

Collection	Monograph	Journals Issues	Journals Titles	Inactive Journals	Microfilm	Microfiche	Monographs and Journal Issues	Microforms
China	1,221,504	219,835	6,104	10,826	22,946	4,649	1,441,339	27,595
Japan	1,237,137	142,992	8,039	9,451	15,478	21,867	1,380,129	37,345
Korea	339,952	115,622	2,367	5,598	5,308	345	455,574	5,653
Mongolia	13,280	4,005	78	99	201	3,919	17,285	4,120
South Asia	375,904	218,861	1,601	2,120	20,174	337,258	594,765	357,432
Southeast Asia	293,419	178,928	2,736	8,462	15,001	187,778	472,347	202,779
Tibet	18,688	767	59	37	832	14,763	19,455	15,595
Grand Total	3,499,884	881,010	20,984	36,593	79,940	570,579	438,0894	650,519

LC Overseas Operations

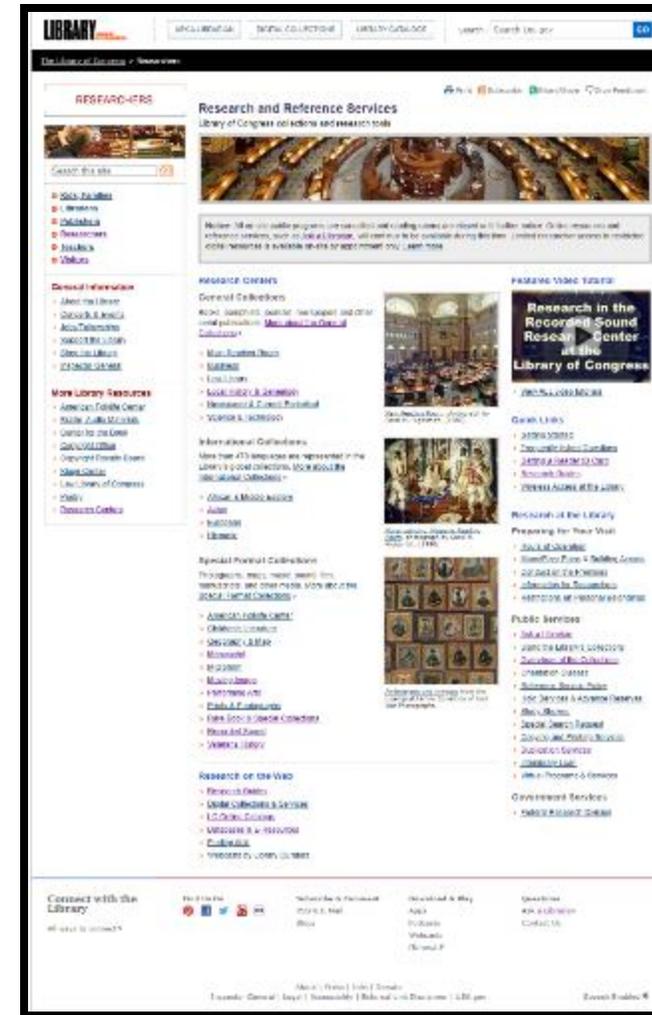


Asian Collections in Other Divisions

- 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



The Chinese Herbal and Materia Medica (A 1655 edition)



Greetings of the Chinese to the Americans



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

Chinese Rare Book Digital Collection

- 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.

Chinese Rare Book Digital Collection

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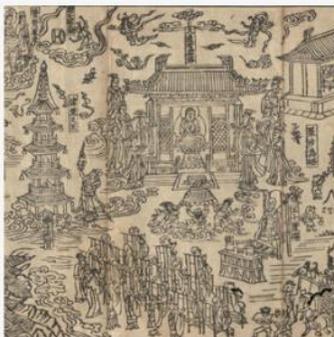
Chinese Rare Book Digital Collection

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[Collection Items](#)

[Articles and Essays](#)

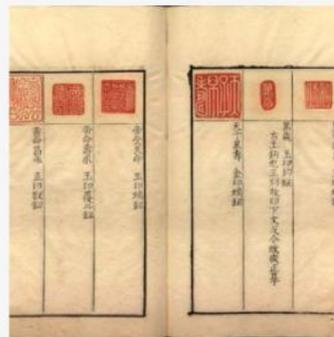
Featured Content



Miao fa lian hua jing : qi
juan



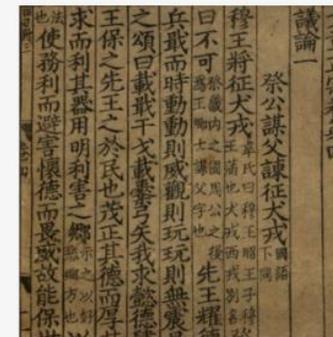
Yi li tu



Xuanhe ji gu yin shi



Fen men ji zhu Du Gongbu
shi



Wen zhang zheng zong



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Yongle da dian

- 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* 冊).
- 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.

Yongle da dian

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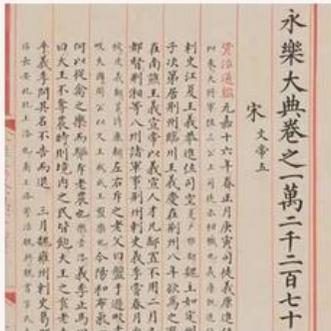
COLLECTION

Yongle Da Dian

[About this Collection](#)

[Collection Items](#)

Featured Content



Yongle da dian : juan yi wan
yi qian jiu bai wu shi liu zhi
juan...



Yongle da dian : juan yi wan
yi qian jiu bai wu shi ba zhi
juan ...



Yongle da dian : juan yi wan
jiu bai si shi jiu zhi juan yi
wan ...



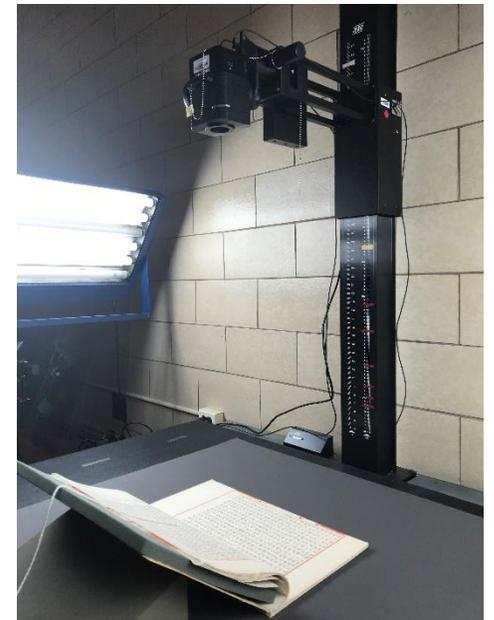
Yongle da dian : juan yi wan
jiu qian qi bai ba shi wu zhi
juan ...



Yongle da dian : juan yi wan
jiu qian qi bai ba shi wu zhi
juan ...

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

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COLLECTION

Selections from the Naxi Manuscript Collection

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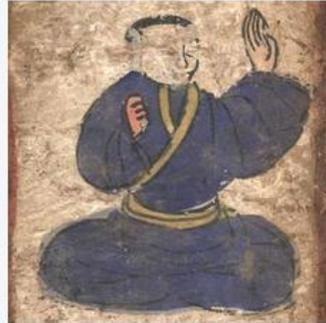
Featured Content



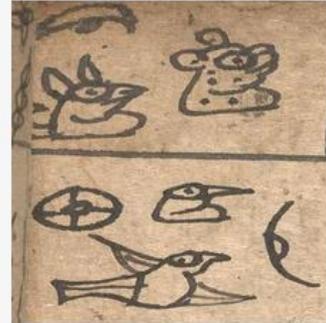
NZS, Road the Gods decide
= Naxi Zu xiang xing wen
jing dian. ...



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/>) 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?

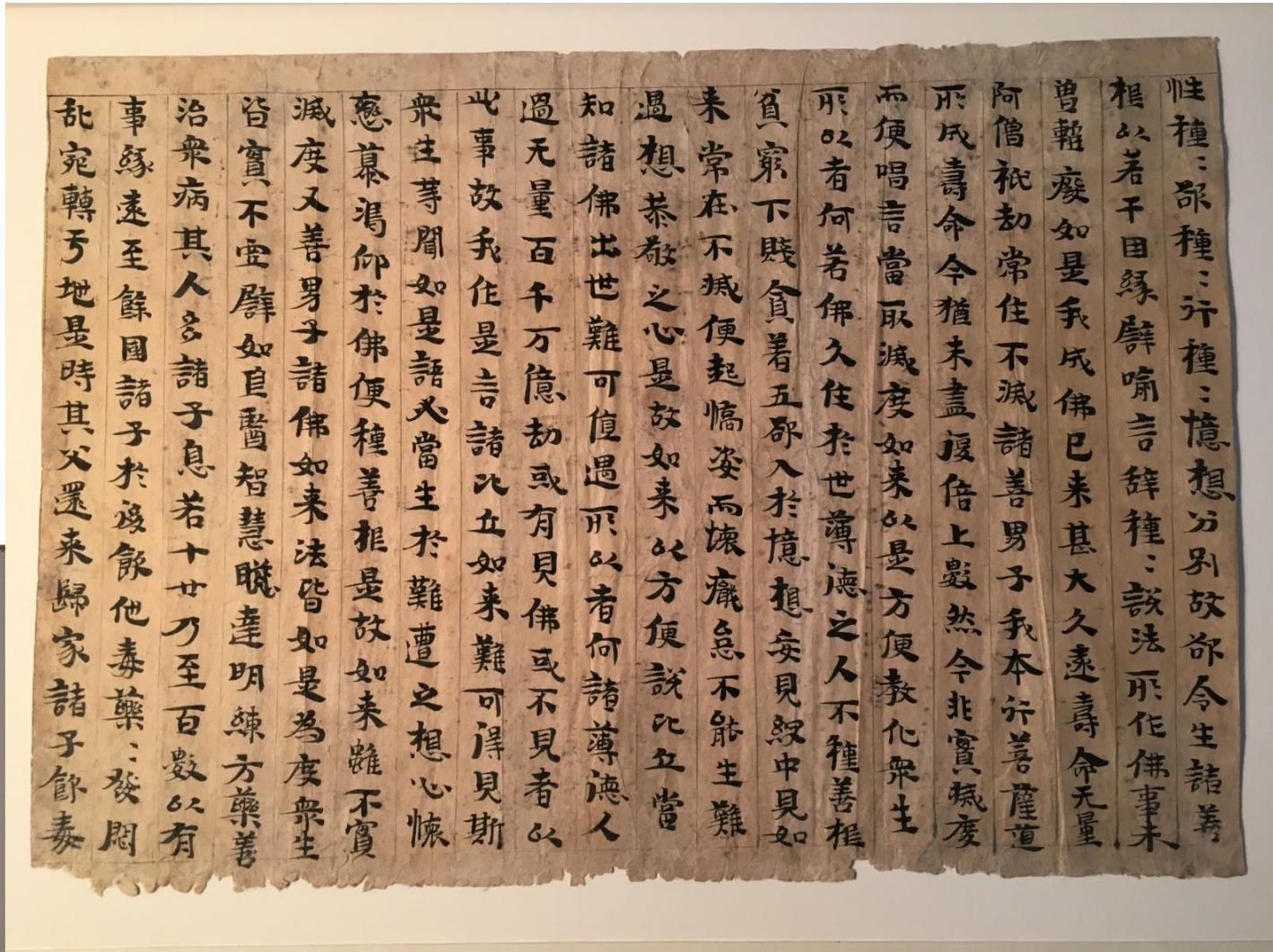


大般涅槃經. 卷三十七
六朝寫經殘卷
王樹枏書藏

<https://lccn.loc.gov/2011457367>

北魏寫本佛經殘頁

<https://lccn.loc.gov/2016500604>



性種：部種：行種：憶想分別故。命今生諸善
相。以若干因緣。譬喻言辭種：說法。取作佛事。未
曾輟廢。如是。我成佛已。來甚大。久遠。壽命。无量。
阿僧祇劫。常住不滅。諸善男子。我本行善。薩婆
不成。壽命。今猶未盡。復倍上數。然今非實。滅度
而便唱言。當取滅度。如來。以是方便。教化眾生。
所以者何。若佛久住於世。薄德之人。不種善根。
貧窮下賤。貪著五欲。入於憶想。妄見。經中。見如
未常在不滅。便起憍姿。而懷癡急。不能生難
過想。恭敬之心。是故。如來。以方便說。比丘當
知。諸佛出世。難可值遇。所以者何。諸薄德人。
過。无量。百千万億劫。或有見佛。或不見者。以
此事故。我作是言。諸比丘。如來難可得見。斯
衆生等。聞如是語。又當生於難遭之想。心懷
慙慕。渴仰於佛。便種善根。是故。如來。雖不實
滅度。又善男子。諸佛如來。法皆如是。為度衆生。
皆實。不虛。譬如。自醫智慧。眼。達明。練方藥。善
治衆病。其人。多諸子息。若十。廿。乃至。百數。以有
事緣。遠至。餘國。諸子。於後。餘他。毒藥。發。闕
亂。宛轉。于地。是時。其父。還來。歸家。諸子。餘毒。

勝天王般若波羅蜜多經. 卷四

<https://lccn.loc.gov/2016500607>



波羅蜜寶无苦行為伏外道故示現之而彼
天魔寶不能壞是欲界主故示降伏化諸衆
生舍利弗外道自謂苦行第一是故菩薩示
現苦行能超過彼舍利弗或有衆生但見菩
薩屈一膝立或見菩薩舉兩手立或見菩薩
視日而立或見菩薩卧棘刺林或卧牛糞或坐
身而立或見菩薩卧棘刺林或卧牛糞或坐
方石或復卧地或見卧板或卧杵上或卧塵
土或著板衣或著芒衣或著草衣或樹皮
衣或復裸形或著茅衣或面向日隨日而轉
或食稗子或見食麥或食草根雜諸樹葉
食菓食華或食署預或見食竿或見食藕
或六日一食或見食豆或食大豆或食炒穀或
見食麻或見食米或見飲水而以度日或見菩
薩食一滴蘊而以度日或一滴蜜或一滴乳或
无所食或見眠熟舍利弗菩薩摩訶薩示現如
是種種苦行六年之中一事不虧菩薩寶无
如是苦行衆生見有以諸衆生應以苦行而
得度脫為是等故菩薩示之有六十那由他
人安住三乘舍利弗復有天人宿世善根深

Thank You!

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