

# Chinese Cataloging Outsourcing Project at the Tateuchi East Asia Library



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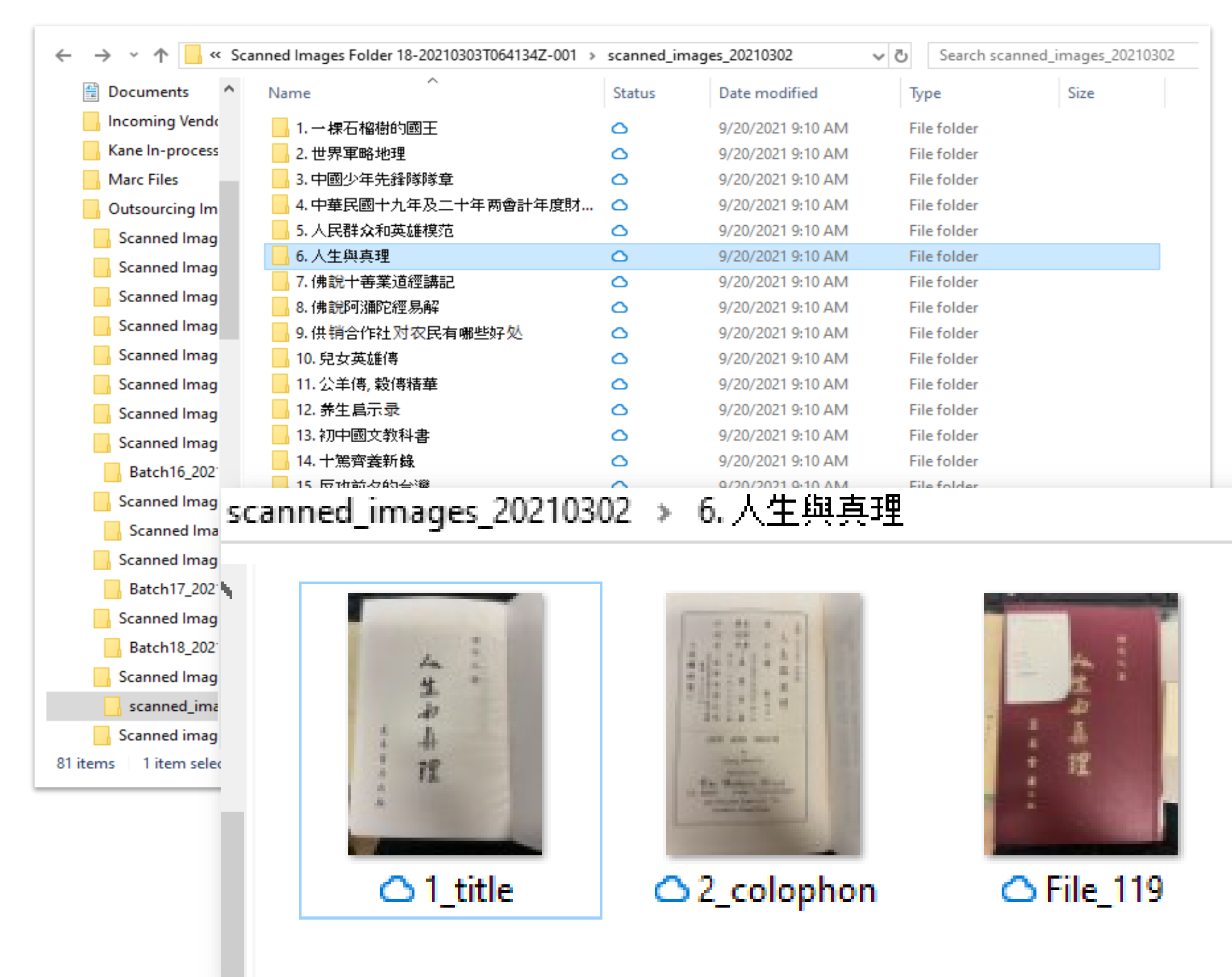
## Introduction

To enhance discovery and access to its historical Chinese backlogs of 5000+ titles, Tateuchi East Asia Library carried out a project entitled “Discover Republican China—Cataloging Hidden Treasures of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese Publications” in 2020.

The project was accomplished through outsourcing, funded by the University of Washington Libraries’ Allen Signature Award. China National Publications Import & Export Corporation (CNPIEC) was contracted as the cataloging vendor.

### Significant Events

- January 2020: created workflow and training materials; recruited two student assistants and started training students to prepare outsourcing materials.
- March 2020: library closed. Students left campus.
- May-June 2020: Prepared 150 titles for outsourcing
- July 2020: sent first batch of 50 titles of outsourcing materials to the cataloging vendor to test out the workflow.
- October 2020: cataloging intern joined the project
- 2021: Hired four student assistants
- 2022: Hired two more student assistants
- June 2022: Outsourced total of 3,500 titles with the grant.
- October 2022: Outsourced an additional 500 titles with Tateuchi EAL’s budget.



Outsourced materials organized in folders

## Process Overview

- The Chinese Cataloging & Metadata Librarian hired and trained student assistants to prepare outsourcing materials, which included sorting out materials needing original cataloging or complex copy cataloging, taking images, recording physical descriptions, creating folders for each title and uploading them to a Google shared drive.
- The Chinese Cataloging & Metadata Librarian compiled the folders in Google Drive and transferred them to the cataloging vendor via WeTransfer file sharing website.
- Using OCLC Connexion, the cataloging vendor created new records or enhanced existing bibliographic records and saved these to the online save file.
- The Chinese Cataloging & Metadata Librarian and student assistants reviewed the records in OCLC Connexion’s online save file against the physical items, then produced the records and exported them to local library system.
- The Chinese Cataloging & Metadata Librarian reviewed the works of the students and cataloging vendor and provided feedback respectively to ensure quality and accuracy of the bibliographical records.

## Challenges

- Diverse backlog materials
  - Various types of materials, e.g., print monographs, maps, music scores, and print reproduction, etc.
  - A variety of minority languages, e.g., Xibo, Dongba, and Yi, etc.
  - Different bindings, e.g., traditional thread binding and bound-withs
- Student Training
  - Students had no prior cataloging experience
  - Student availability varied quarter by quarter
- Creating bibliographic records without physical item
  - Cataloging vendor only had access to the images of the materials, along with the physical descriptions of the items
- Ensuring quality and accuracy of bibliographic data
  - Incomplete sets
  - Missing title pages and/or colophons
  - No publication information
- Pandemic delays
  - The grant was awarded in December 2019 with a funding deadline of June 2022
  - Project started in January 2020. The library closed in early March due to Covid-19, which put the project on hold until May 2020, when library staff were permitted to return to the library to pick-up materials twice a month

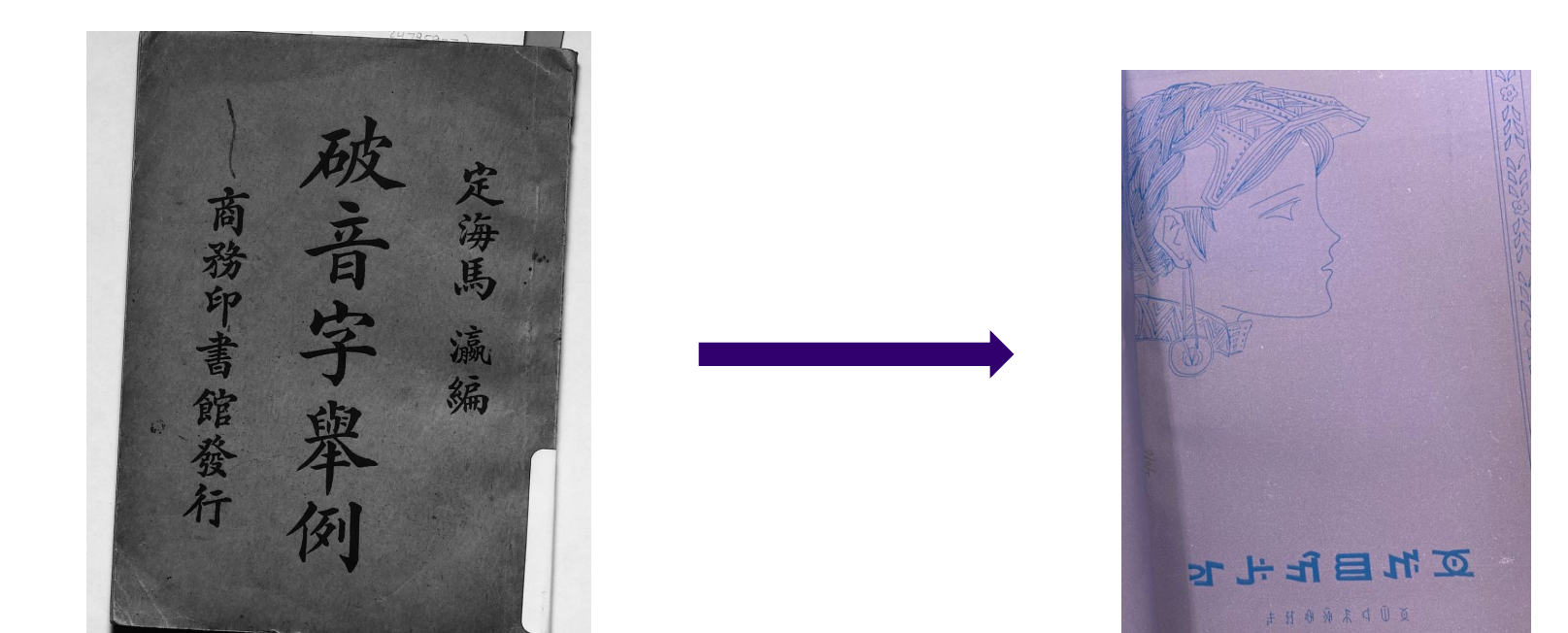
### Selection of the backlog collection



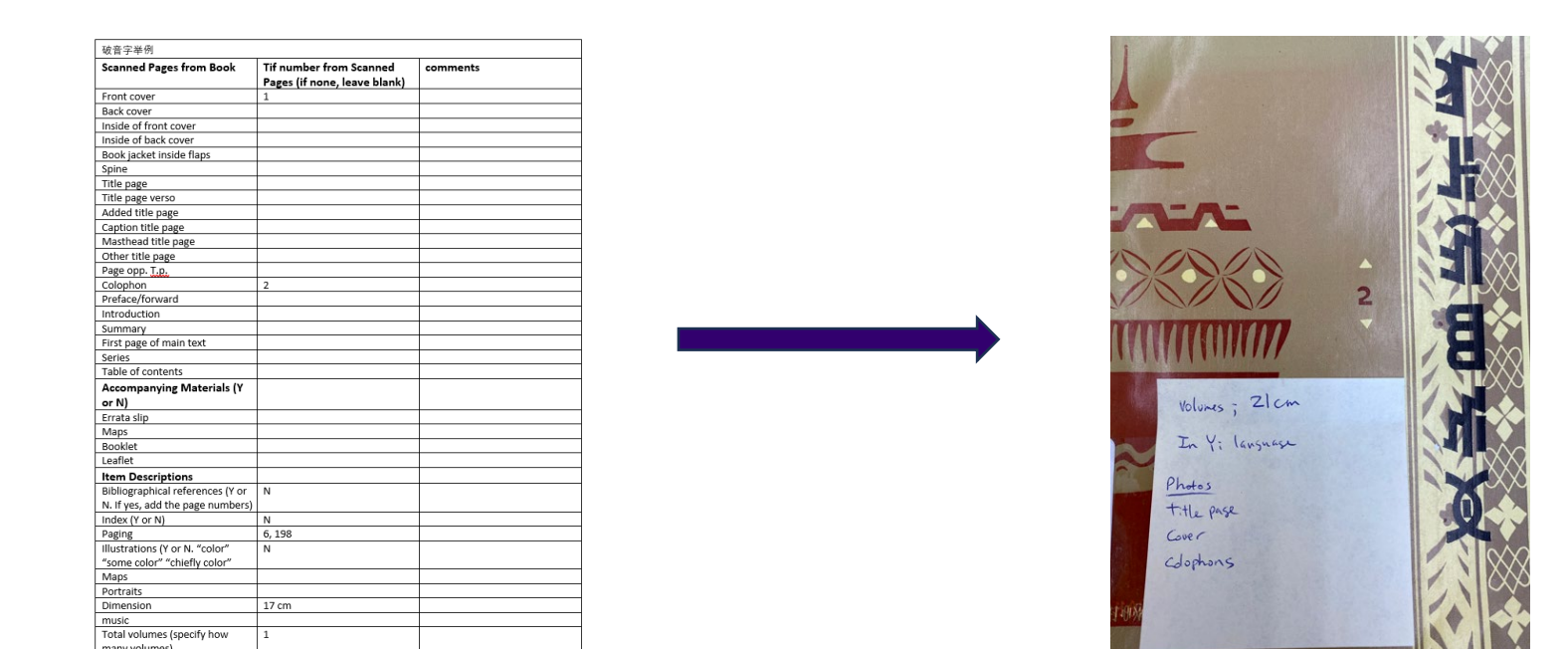
Qian bai nian yan 千百年眼 (Shanghai, 1934)  
Xin yin yue ru men 新音樂入門 (Hong Kong, 1947)  
Deguo shi 德國史 (Shanghai, 1936)

## Takeaways

- Re-evaluating and refining procedures to streamline workflow.



Example 1: From scanner to taking pictures from phones



Example 2: From Word File to sticky notes to record physical description and other information

- Too much information is better than not enough information. Provide as much information as possible for the cataloging vendor to accurately describe the item:
  - Writing down language of materials if other than or more than just Chinese
  - Writing down categories of literary works
  - Providing the table of contents for items that cannot determine subject based on title
  - Providing prefatory materials that indicate date if items have no publication date
- The reviewing process was time consuming. It was impossible to review every bibliographic record within limited time and capacity of one staff person. Thus, some inaccuracy was inevitable. Corrections will be made as problems arise.
- Recognized the need for better organization for items that were not ready for marking and immediate placement on library stacks. Approximately 2000 items with preservation needs are housed in storage without any particular order. It is more difficult to retrieve items for patrons when they request them from the online catalog.