

International collaborations with East Asian partners and the International Dunhuang Programme

BRITISH
LIBRARY

12 March 2026

CEAL, CPS *Partnering for Public
Services*

Sara Chiesura

Head, East Asian Collections





National Library of the United Kingdom

Legal Deposit Library

2 sites: London and West Yorkshire

11 Reading Rooms in London

Over 170 million items

1.6 million visitors per year

1.5 million items consulted per year in our reading rooms

2.6 million items collected as Legal Deposit

BRITISH LIBRARY



Our strategy: *Living Knowledge*



CUSTODIANSHIP



RESEARCH



BUSINESS



CULTURE



LEARNING



INTERNATIONAL

Our mission: we make our intellectual heritage accessible to everyone for research, inspiration and enjoyment

East Asian material



Chinese

Printed items (100,000+)
Manuscripts (20,000+)
Periodicals (2,500)
Posters; maps; bones;
photos; prints;
calligraphy scrolls



Japanese

Printed items (80,000)
Manuscripts (500)
Periodicals (6,000)
Woodblock
printed/manuscript
maps; prints; posters;
photos; *manga*



Korean

Printed items (15,000)
Manuscripts (50)
Journals (500)
Early maps and atlases;
material on North Korea



Other languages

Mongolian (inc. 90 rare printed)
Manchu (100)
Naxi (200)
Lolo and other minority languages
in China



And many more in Philatelic,
Maps, Visual Arts, India Office
Library, Sound and Moving Images

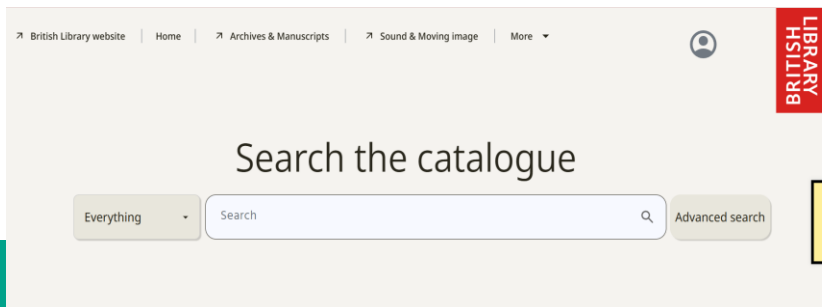
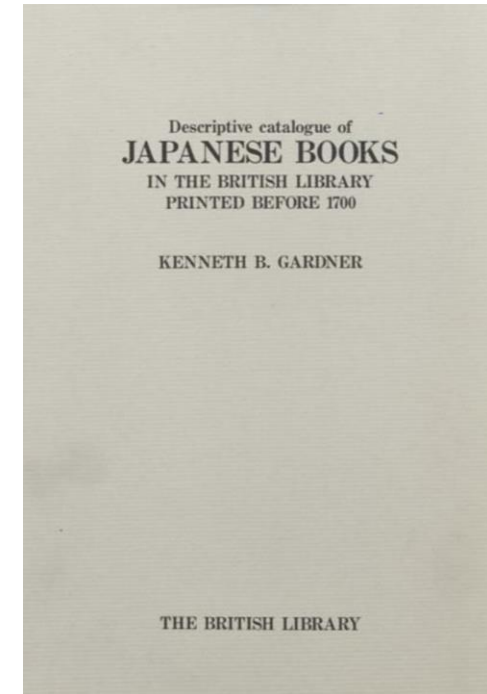
1. Cataloguing activities



NII (National Institute of Informatics – former NACSIS) several years collaboration for the UK Union Catalogue of Japanese Books. Exchange of standards and practices. Migration of tens of thousands records to the BL website. NIJL (National Institute of Japanese Literature), also with digitisation and skills exchange. Surimono project with Kindai University: 500+ items to be catalogued via high-res pictures (starting)



Shandong University: 700 manuscripts
National Central Library Taiwan: 6.000 pre-1912 printed books and now in-house records enhancing
National Library of China: record enhancements for MARC21 standards from catalogue cards



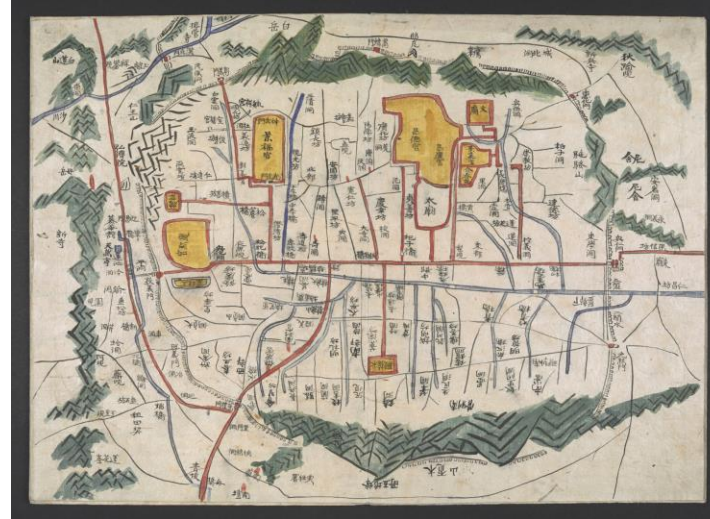
2. Digitisation activities: Chinese

- 400 + **oracle bones** (also in 3D) - *in collaboration with NLC*
- 24 volumes of the **Yongle Encyclopaedia** – *in collaboration with NLC Press*
- 16 premodern **manuscripts** – *in collaboration with Shandong University*
- 113 selected **Macau/Chinese Maps** Digitisation Project – *funded by Macao University of Science and Technology (MUST) (involving Maps collection)*
- 40+ pre-1912 **rare printed books and manuscripts**– *in collaboration with NCL in Taiwan*

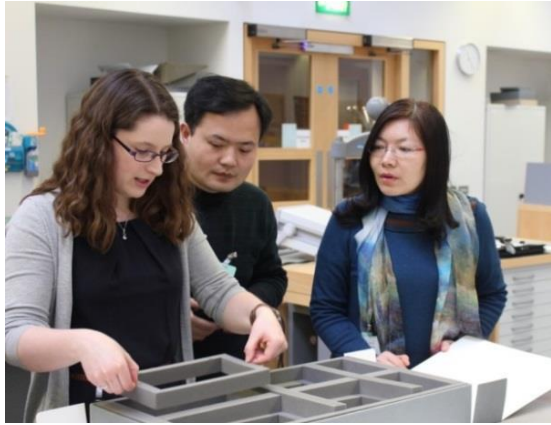


2. Digitisation activities: Japanese & Korean

- 50 Japanese **Kimono pattern & design books** (*Sasakawa Foundation*)
- 40 **Korean rare books**, manuscripts & maps (*with NLK*)
- 31 **Japanese rare books** (*with NIJL*)
- 25 17thC **Japanese manuscripts** (*Keio Uni*)
- 235 woodblock prints of **Sino-Japanese War 1894-1895** (*JACAR*)
- **Surimono** project: 500+ items (*Kindai University*) - now starting



3. Professional skills exchanges



Oracle bones project with NLC: research and conservation reciprocal visits (2015)

Conservation and curatorial exchange at NLC (2019)



China-UK Library Forum (2021-22)
Online exchange on the conservation of Lotus Sutra manuscripts



Workshop on multilingual cataloguing: BL colleagues with NII (2026)

日本語 English

ホーム / お知らせ
/ 「第1回 多言語目録勉強会 ―この素晴らしい目録に賞賛を：NACSIS-CATの多言語目録―」のお知らせ

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- ▶ 規程
- ▶ ドキュメント
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「第1回 多言語目録勉強会 ―この素晴らしい目録に賞賛を：NACSIS-CATの多言語目録―」のお知らせ

2026-01-20

本委員会では、図書館関係者が学術情報資源の基盤構築、管理、共有および提供にかかる活動を推進するための意見交換をする場として、図書館システム・ネットワーク「ユーザーグループ」を立ち上げ、ユーザーグループSNS(Discord)を運用しております。

2025年7月に、Discordに新たに「多言語目録」に関する検討を行うチャンネルを開設し、開設記念イベントを開催いたしました。今後、「多言語目録」では、定期的な勉強会を開催したり、多言語目録についての関心事や困りごとを持ち寄りすることによって、それに係る方々の関係作りをしていくことができると考えており、このたび、第1回勉強会を以下のとおり開催いたします。

BL – Keio University partnership

Keio/BL FutureLearn course

Travelling Books: History in Europe and Japan (2022)



Travelling Books: History in Europe and Japan

★★★★★ 4.8 (24 reviews)

785 enrolled on this course

🕒 3 weeks

🕒 3 hours per week

🎓 Digital certificate when eligible

Join course

.... and a new one in the making this year: ***Global Codex: a Tactile Journey in the History of the Book***, to be released in Autumn 2026.

International Dunhuang Programme

The International Dunhuang Programme

Established in 1994

A global partnership: over 40 collaborating institutions worldwide.

Founding partners: National Library of China, Dunhuang Academy, BnF, Berlin-Brandenburg Institute of Humanities, Ryukoku University, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St Petersburg.

Mission:

- Preserve, document and digitise materials from Dunhuang and other Eastern Silk Road sites
- Advance research, learning and understanding of the history and cultures of the Eastern Silk Roads
- Make images and metadata freely available through the IDP's online platform



IDP International
Dunhuang
Programme
國際敦煌項目



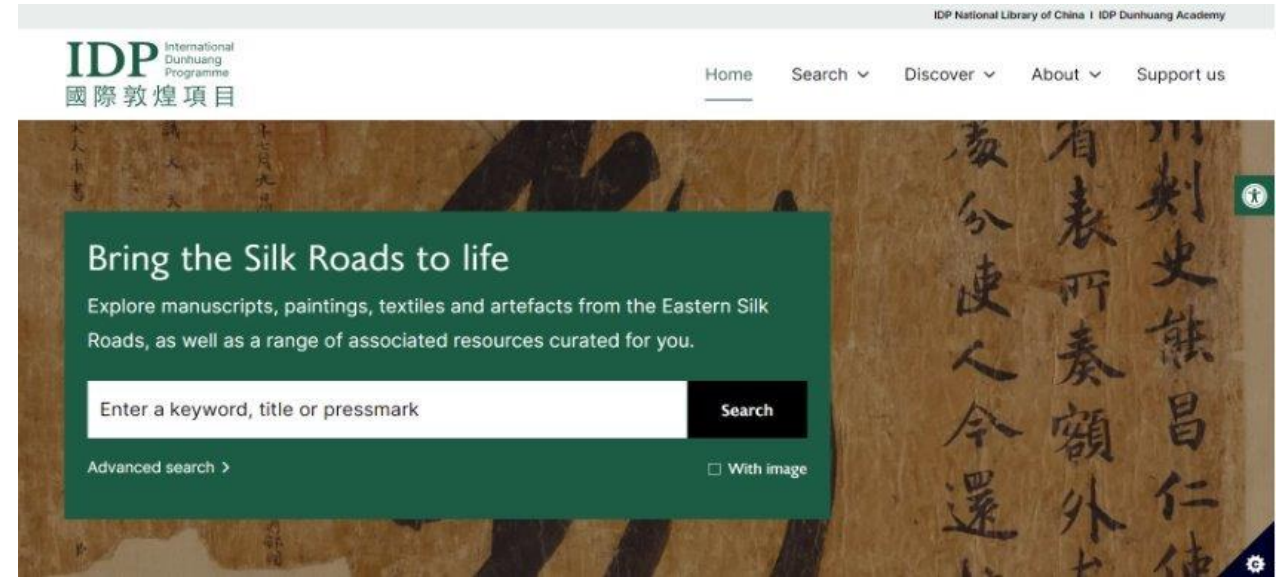
The redeveloped IDP website (2021-2024)

Improved functionalities and design

Enhanced image viewer (IIIF)

New content

<https://idp.bl.uk>



Browse by material



Manuscripts



Paintings



Textiles



Artefacts



Photographs



Archives

IDP Blog An introduction to sketches in the Stein Collection

By Vicky Mansfield
5 May 2023

Collection Highlights Conservation Guest Post

Digital and physical preservation underpin much of the work carried out by the International Dunhuang Project at the British Library and are a priority for everyone involved. My position as Preservation Assistant requires me to consider long- and short-term preservation needs for the items in our care.

My job can involve packing items securely for transit around the library as well as longer term requirements such as appropriate storage solutions and ingesting material to the IDP website. I work alongside photographers, digitisation officers responsible for image quality control, conservators and curators to facilitate our goals of making material freely available online. It is

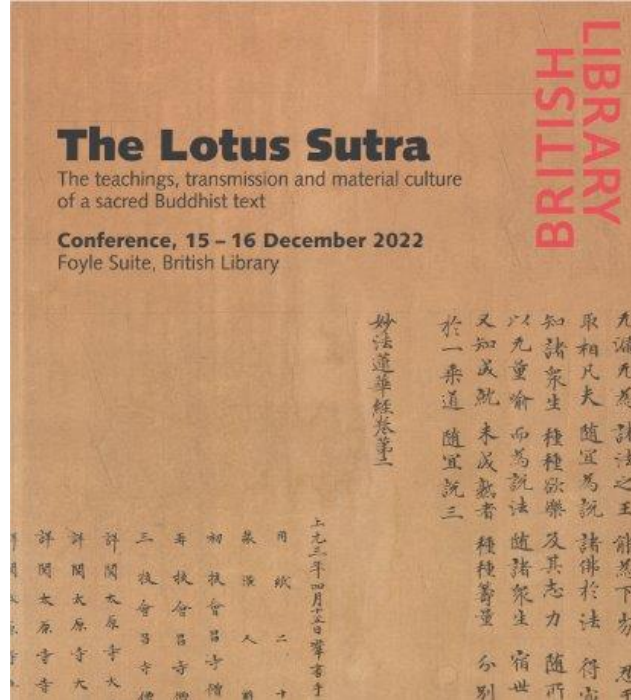


Blogs, events, articles and more!



Learning resources for all ages

Over 150,000 items and 1/2 million images



The Lotus Sutra Project (2017-2022)

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Scope: conserve, digitise and catalogue 793 manuscript copies of the Lotus Sutra in Chinese language from Dunhuang Cave 17

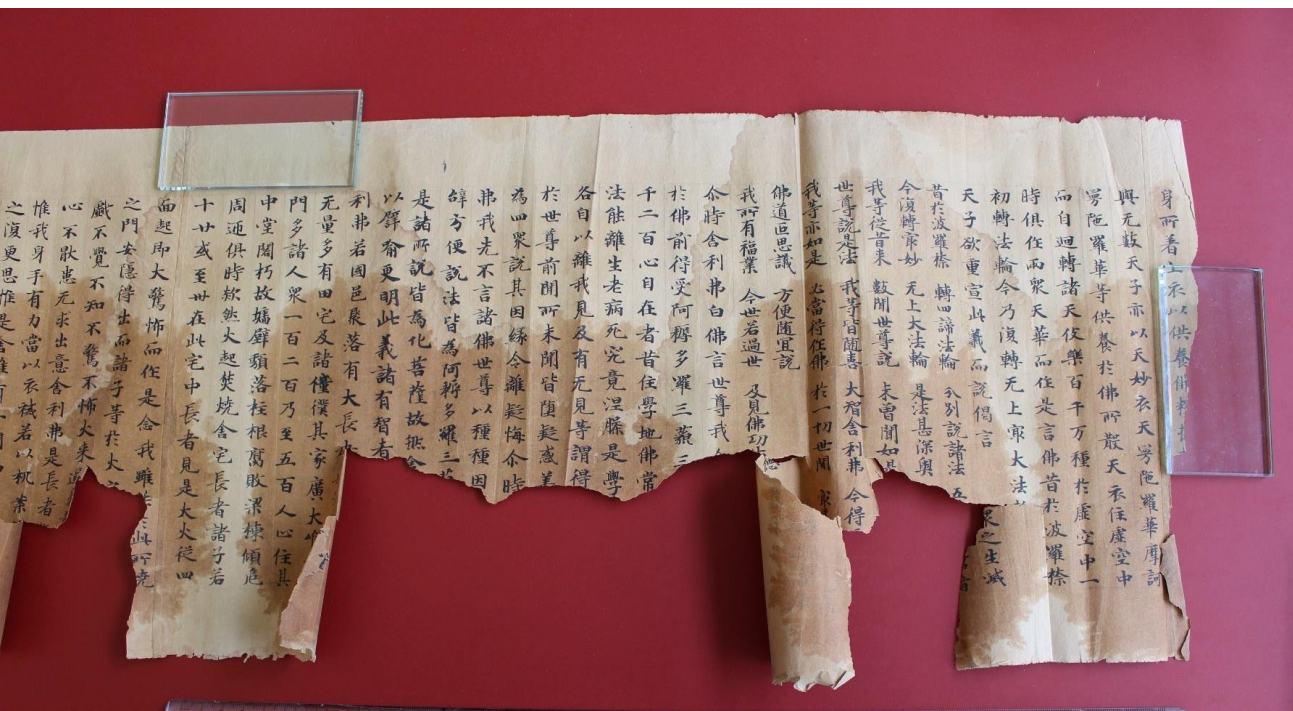
Funding: Bei Shan tang Foundation

Outputs:

- 674 manuscripts conserved
- Almost 17K images produced and shared online via the IDP website

Engagement:

- 1 x International conference (15-16 Dec. 2022) and 1 x Open Day
- 12 x blog posts from members of the team, 3 x peer-reviewed articles, 18 presentations
- 2 professional exchanges




The IDP-Georgetown North American Silk Road Project (2017-2021)

Scope: to identify Dunhuang and Silk Roads materials in North American collections and ingest their metadata and images into the IDP database.

Collaboration between the British Library and Georgetown University

19 participating institutions

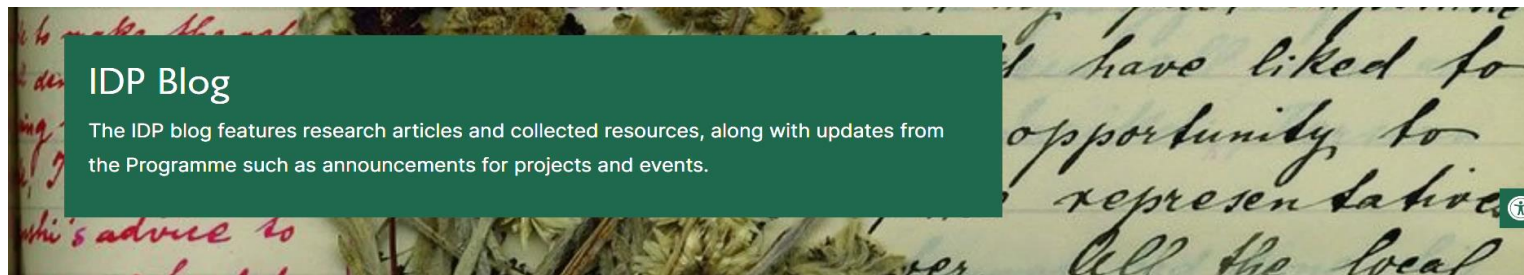


Autumn 2017
Current IDP News Issue No. 49/50

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- The Metropolitan Museum of Art — Pieces from Dunhuang?
- Selected Bibliography on North American Collections
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- Conference Reports
- Forthcoming
- IDP Field Trip to Kharakhoto
- Conservation and Science
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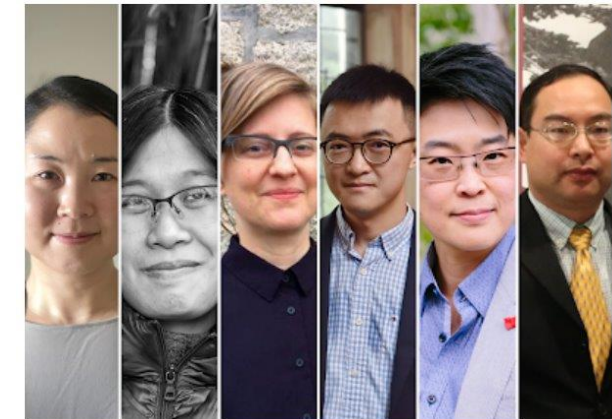
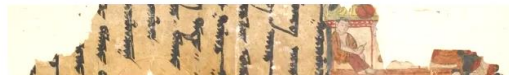


IDP Blog

The IDP blog features research articles and collected resources, along with updates from the Programme such as announcements for projects and events.

[Home](#) > IDP Blog

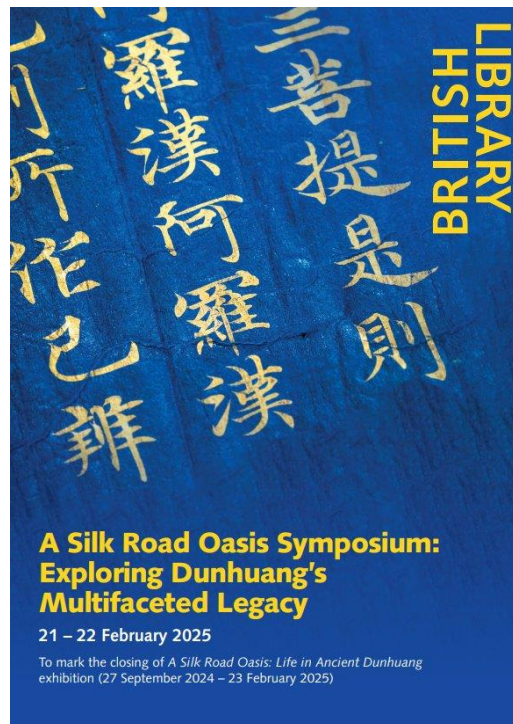
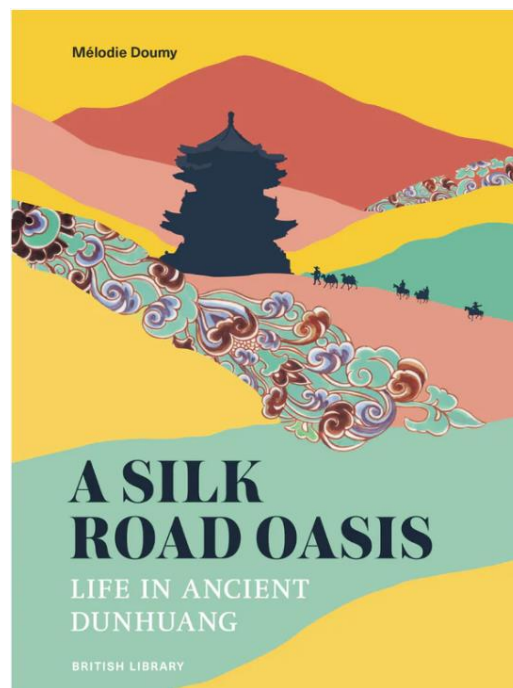
Explore the blog



Lecture series: “Following the Silk Roads to North America” (Summer 2021)

A Silk Road Oasis: Life in Ancient Dunhuang (27 Sept 2024-23 Feb 2025)

- Ca. **50 items** from Dunhuang
- **A people-centred approach** through the stories of individuals who lived, worshipped, worked and travelled to Dunhuang.
- **Nearly 30,000 visitors**, exceeding all key KPI
- Collaboration with 3 Chinese institutions
- + an exhibition book (to be published in Chinese), a bilingual 3D virtual tour, events and online content



East Asia section, curatorial and collection management



Sara Chiesura
Head
East Asian Collections



Mélodie Doumy
Lead Curator
Chinese Collections
(Stein/Hoernle) and IDP Manager



Emma Harrison
Curator and Retro-con Projects
Manager
Chinese Collections



Anastasia Pineschi
IDP Project Manager



Han-Lin Hsieh
Curator
Chinese Collections



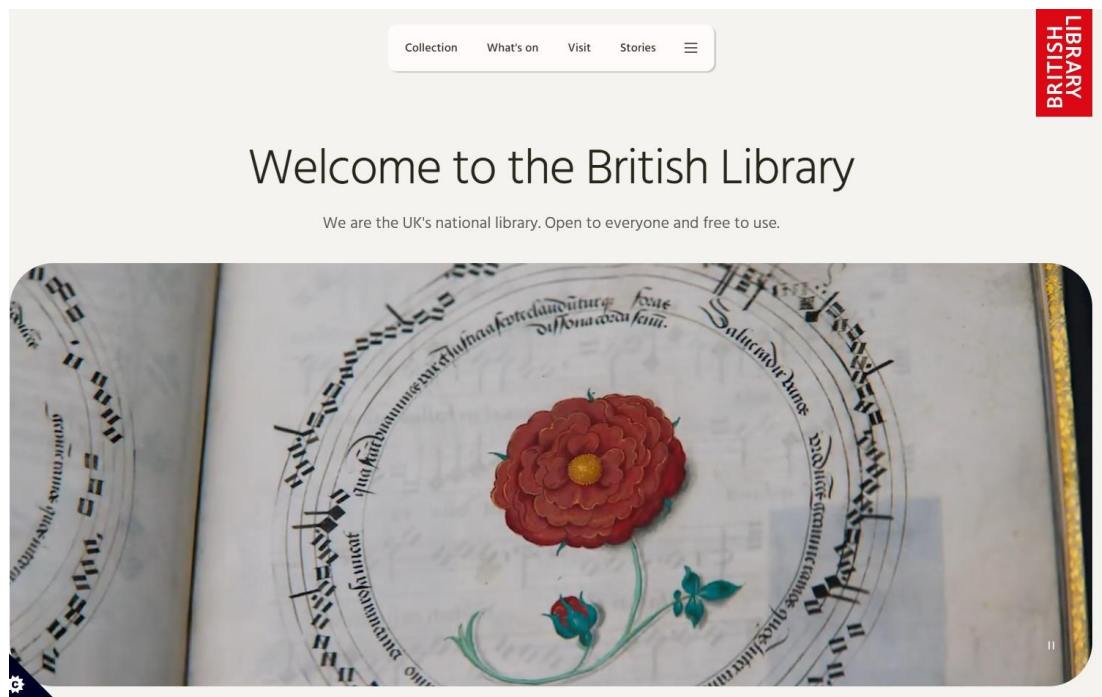
Alexavier Iu
Cataloguer
Chinese Retro-con Projects



Jiyeon Wood
Lead Curator
Japanese and Korean
Collections – from April



Yasuyo Ohtsuka
Curator
Japanese Collections



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Photo by Sam Walton

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**Thank
you**

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