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CHINESE RARE BOOK COLLECTIONS IN TAIWAN: THEIR HISTORY, CATALOGING AND CONSERVATION

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Rare Book Collections

Among the many libraries in Taiwan, only eight libraries have rare book collections. The collection in the National Central Library (NCL) is considered the largest of all. It has 143,000 volumes of rare editions, including 120,000 volumes shipped from the NCL, Nanking; more than 20,000 volumes from the National Library of Peiping (NLP), which are in the custody of the NCL; and about 1,000 volumes from the former Northeastern University.

In 1933, when the NCL was established, it had no rare book collection. The growth of the library's collection to its current size was accidental. During the Sino-Japanese War in the 1930s and '40s, many rare book collectors and families in the Japanese-occupied territories were forced to sell their collections, both because they were unable to protect the collections and in order to obtain money to survive. Many rare books ended up in the NCL collection. With the assistance of scholars and educators in the Shanghai area, the NCL secretly set up an organization to begin collecting and purchasing rare books.

From 1941 to 1943, the NCL bought 60,000 to 70,000 volumes of Sung, Yüan, and Ming editions from many famous collectors. These purchases included materials from the Chia-yeh-t'ang 嘉業堂 collection of the Liu family 劉氏 of Wu-hsing 吳興; the Shih-yüan 適園 collection of father and son, Chang Chün-heng 張鈞衡 and Chang Ch'in-po 張沂伯; the Ch'ün-pi-lou 群碧樓 collection of the Teng 鄧 family of Nanking; a large portion of the Shen family collection of P'an-yü, Kuang-tung; and parts of the Ch'ü 瞿 family collection of Chang-shu, Kiangsu; and the Yang 楊 family collection of Liao-ch'eng, Shantung.

After the Second World War, in 1945, the NCL took over about 40,000 volumes of rare books from Chen Ch'ün 陳群, a high official of the Wang Ching-wei regime under Japanese sponsorship. When the NCL moved to Taiwan in 1949, the NCL rare book collection exceeded 120,000 volumes.

The National Library of Peiping rare book collection, which was shipped from Shanghai to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. before the Pearl Harbor incident in 1941 for safekeeping and microfilming, was transferred to the NCL in Taipei for custody in 1965. This collection consists of 210 Sung editions, five Chin editions, 230 Yüan editions.

The second largest rare book collection in Taiwan is in the National Palace Museum (NPM) which has 81,000 volumes including (1) the imperial T'ien-lu lin-lang 天祿琳琅 collection; (2) the Kuan-hai-t'ang 觀海堂 collection of Yang Shou-ching 楊守敬 of I-tu, Ssuehuan; (3) the Wen-lan-ko 文瀾閣 set of *Ssu-k'u-ch'üan-shu* 四庫全書, 3,451 titles in 36,381 volumes,

which was reprinted in 1,500 volumes by the Taiwan Commercial Press from 1983; (4) the Li-tsao-t'ang 禮藻堂 set of *Ssu-k'u-ch'üan-shu hui yao* 四庫全書摘要, 463 titles in 11,180 volumes, which was reprinted in 500 volumes by the World Book Company in Taiwan in 1986-88; (5) the complete set of *Yüan-wei pieh-ts'ang* 宛委別藏, 160 titles in 780 volumes, which was reprinted by the Commercial Press in Taiwan in 1981.

In addition, the NPM received several gifts, including the Yen-i-lou 研易樓 collection of Shen Chung-t'ao 沈仲濤 of Kuei-chi, Chekiang; the collection of General Hsü Ting-yao 徐廷瑤, a former commander in the Nationalist Army; and others. The current NPM rare book collection consists of 111 Sung editions, three Chin editions, and 131 Yüan editions.

The Library of the Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica (LIA) is the third largest rare book collection in Taiwan, which has 2,300 titles in 21,500 volumes. Part of the collection was purchased from the Ch'ün-pi-lou collection of the Teng family of Nanking, which consists of 28 Sung editions and 38 Yüan editions.

The fourth largest rare book collection in Taiwan is in the National Taiwan University Library (TUL), which has approximately 9,500 volumes of rare editions. Most of them were purchased from the Kung family of Fukien during the Japanese occupation period. This collection has only one each of Sung and Yüan editions, and the rest are mostly Ming editions and manuscript copies.

The NCL Taiwan Branch, Research Institute of the National Defense Library, the National Normal University Library, and the Tung-hai University Library each have a rare book collection of a few hundred volumes which are mostly Ming editions and manuscripts.

In summary, there are approximately 225,000 volumes of rare books with 350 Sung editions, eight Chin editions, and 400 Yüan editions in Taiwan.

Rare Book Catalogs

The earliest rare book catalog was compiled and published in two volumes by the NCL in 1957. In 1968, with the support of the Committee for Sino-American Cooperation on Humanities and Social Sciences at Academia Sinica, a union catalog of rare books was published under the title *T'ai-wan kang ts'ang shan pen lien ho shu mu* 台灣公藏善本聯合書目. Each library was responsible for its own collection's compilation with an agreement to use a uniform format and classification system. Of the seven-volume set, four volumes were published by the NCL and one each by the NPM, the LIA, the TUL and others. A combined author and title index was compiled and published by the NCL in two volumes in 1971-72, providing unified indexes to the entries in eight rare book collections in Taiwan.

In 1981, the NCL enlarged and revised the 1968 four-volume catalog and published it as the *Kuo li chung yang t'u shu kuan shan pen shu mu tseng ting erh pan* 國立中央圖書館善本書目增訂二版. The revision, which paid special attention to correcting errors of the

Sung and Yüan editions, was based largely on *Chūgoku hōshoshi* 中國訪書志 by Professor Abe Ryūichi 阿部隆一 of Keiō University, Japan. Soon after the completion of typesetting of the revised second edition, the NCL received a gift of 179 sets of rare books from the Kuan-fu-chai 觀復齋 collection of the Wang family of Cheng-yang, Honan; the Hsüan-ping-shih 玄冰室 collection of the Yüan family of Hsiang-tan, Hunan; and the collection of the Chinese Ministry of Transportation in Taiwan. These titles were added at the end of the revised second edition as a supplement. In 1958 and 1961, the NCL compiled and published two illustrated rare book catalogs: *Sung pen t'u lu* 宋本圖錄 and *Chin Yüan pen t'u lu* 金元本圖錄 for its holdings of Sung, Chin, and Yüan editions.

The National Library of Peiping rare book collection, while deposited at LC, was microfilmed on 1,063 reels. However, the order of the filming did not follow the original classification order. Therefore, it was extremely difficult to locate materials. In 1969, at the suggestion of the Committee on East Asian Libraries in the United States, the NCL compiled and published a classified catalog of the NLP collection in the custody of the NCL, titled *Kuo-li Pei-p'ing t'u shu kuan shan pen shu mu* 國立北平圖書館善本書目 with an author and title index in which the microfilm reel number is indicated in each title entry.

Book catalogs in general are a convenient tool for searching; however, they record only book title, *chüan* or volume number, author/compiler, and type of edition and contain no detailed information about the book. The compilation of a descriptive catalog of the NCL rare book collection was always the major concern of Dr. Chiang Fu-ts'ung 蔣復璁, the first Director of the NCL. However, due to the size of the collection, more than 10,000 titles, and the lack of funds and manpower, only two to three hundred title entries were written by the NCL's Special Collection staff. When Dr. Tseng Chi-chün 曾濟群 took charge of the NCL last year, he initiated a five-year project to compile a descriptive catalog for the NCL rare book collection, which will begin next summer.

The NPM published separately a rare and old book catalog in 1968 and 1970. In 1982, the NPM compiled and published a two-volume catalog, *Ku kung shan pen chiu chi tsung mu* 故宮善本書籍總目, which includes both the rare and other old books in its collection. A unique characteristic of this catalog is its application of the *pieh-ts'ai* 別載 and *hu-chu* 互著 methods devised by Ch'i Ch'eng-yeh 祁承燾 of the Ming dynasty and Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng 章學誠 of the Ch'ing dynasty to record and arrange the individual title entries.

In 1977, the NPM published an illustrated catalog of its Sung editions under the title *Ku kung po wu yüan Sung pen t'u lu* 故宮博物院宋本圖錄, in which sixty-eight titles in seventy-six sets are included. In 1980, the NPM received a gift from Shen Chung-t'ao of Kuei-chi of 1,169 volumes of rare books, including thirty-three Sung editions and seventeen Yüan editions, as well as many Ming editions and manuscripts. An illustrated catalog for this collection was published under the title *Shen shih Yen-i-lou shan pen t'u lu* 沈氏研易樓善本圖錄 in 1986. In the same year, the NPM published another illustrated catalog, *Sung pan t'e chan mu lu* 宋版特展目錄, for a special exhibition of its holdings of Sung editions.

Rare Book Conservation

The NPM has done the best job by far in rare book conservation. It has a 24-hour central air conditioning system, which maintains a temperature of 19-21 degrees centigrade (66-68 degrees Fahrenheit) and 55% humidity, and has a fine sprinkler system. Camphor balls are stored in every rare book cabinet and insect pesticide is sprayed every three years. There is a special smoke and steam treatment room to kill insect spawn. The NPM has a Conservation Department staffed with one professional and three supporting staff members.

The NCL has central air conditioning in its Rare Book Room with one book repair technician. The Academia Sinica also has an air conditioning system for its rare book collection with two book repair technicians. A new library building at Taiwan University is under construction. It will provide a better preservation and conservation facility for its rare books in the future. Preservation and conservation work for the rest of the smaller collections is indeed in need of improvement.

(A report given at the Conference on RLG International Union Catalog of Chinese Rare Books at Princeton in March 1993 and translated by Charles C. Wu of Columbia University – Editor)