



2-1-1996

From the President

Ken Klein

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal>

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Klein, Ken (1996) "From the President," *Journal of East Asian Libraries*: Vol. 1996 : No. 108 , Article 2.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal/vol1996/iss108/2>

This From the President is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of East Asian Libraries by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

From the President

February 16, 1996

The third in our series of old map covers features a detail from a map dated 1626. It is based on the map published by Abraham Ortelius in his *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, in 1584, as "newly augmented" by John Speed and "to be sold in popshead Alley" by George Humble. These are prominent names in the development of Europe's cartographic awareness of the world, and the fact that there are some inaccuracies reflected in their early maps is less important than that they were engaged in producing and circulating widely ever-more accurate maps. It was one of the great boons of the typographic revolution that information could be widely circulated and improved upon through an ever-increasing interchange of ideas and data.

The map detail focuses particularly on a group of islands shown off the coast of China. As we prepare for our annual meeting in Hawaii, we can note--one more time--that in the early seventeenth century Korea was itself thought to be an island. (This was corrected just a few years after this map was printed.) At that time, an island carried the connotation of separateness, even isolation from the mainstream. Communication with people on islands could only be achieved by means of sea travel, which took considerable time and money. To seventeenth century Europeans, island nations at the very furthest end of the Old World continent must have seemed especially remote. Hawaii, of course, was, at that point, so remote that it was yet unknown to Europeans (or Asians).

In terms of communications or even of travel, the idea of the "island" no longer carries the sense of isolation it once did. Preparations for the upcoming meeting have taken place easily between widely dispersed people: across North America, in Hawaii, in Japan. April's meeting in the middle of the Pacific Ocean will give us the opportunity to attract many more of our colleagues from East Asia itself. The island today is more of a crossroads. I look forward to seeing you there.

