



6-1-2006

An Unstated Mission: Chinese Collections in Academic Libraries in the U.S. and Their Services to Overseas Chinese

Yuan Zhou

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

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Zhou, Yuan (2006) "An Unstated Mission: Chinese Collections in Academic Libraries in the U.S. and Their Services to Overseas Chinese," *Journal of East Asian Libraries*: Vol. 2006 : No. 139 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal/vol2006/iss139/5>

This Article 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.

AN UNSTATED MISSION: CHINESE COLLECTIONS IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN THE U.S. AND THEIR SERVICES TO OVERSEAS CHINESE¹

Yuan Zhou

University of Chicago

It has been more than 120 years since the first Chinese collection in an academic library was established in the United States. Since then, many more have been founded in the country while the holdings of the already established collections have continued to grow. The mission of these Chinese collections in academic institutions is, without exception, to support the teaching, studies, and research of their core clientele—the faculty members and students in East Asian studies programs. While Chinese collections continue to be an indispensable resource center for the East Asian studies programs at their campuses, their surrounding environment has greatly changed.

One change that has occurred is in their user population. As the Chinese and Chinese-American populations substantially increased in and around campuses, most collections found themselves serving more overseas Chinese users than their intended “core clientele.” This paper examines briefly the scale of Chinese collections in today’s US academic libraries, their growth over time, and the changes that have occurred in their user population. It also identifies the major functions that these collections have served to the local overseas Chinese population, a topic that has never been really discussed in professional literature. In bringing this often-unstated mission to light, the author hopes the East Asian library profession will pay more attention to the needs of this user group while continuing to fulfill the collections’ primary mission.

Introduction

The establishment of a Chinese collection in an American academic library can be traced back to 1878, when Yale University received an unusual gift from one of its students. The gift was a set of *Gujin tushu jicheng*, a 10,000-volume Chinese encyclopedia compiled during the Kangxi and Yongzheng periods of the Qing Dynasty and printed in 1728. The donor was Mr. Rong Hong, the first ever Chinese student to graduate from an American university. The occasion coincided with Yale’s newly established curriculum on Chinese language and inspired the University to start an East Asian collection in its library. From then on, the Yale University Library has continued to collect Chinese publications, and its collection now totals more than 430,000 volumes. Over the years, dozens more Chinese collections have been established in academic libraries around the United States.

The Growth of Chinese Collections in Academic Libraries

According to a report prepared by the Council on East Asian Libraries (CEAL) Statistical Committee, 44 academic libraries in the United States reported their holdings for the fiscal year of 2003-04. Table I was constructed using the data from the report and displays the Chinese language holdings in each of the 44 East Asian libraries/collections.²

¹ This paper is based on a presentation given by the author at “the Third International Conference of Institutes & Libraries for Chinese Overseas Studies” held August 18-20, 2005 in Singapore.

² Data source: “Council on East Asian Libraries Statistics 2003-2004,” *Journal of East Asian Libraries*, no. 135 (Feb. 2005), pp. 36-38, 43-44). In using the data to construct the Table, the author identified some errors in the original report and made a number of necessary corrections.

**TABLE I: HOLDINGS OF CHINESE COLLECTIONS
IN AMERICAN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES**

| Institution | Type | Start Year | Total Vols Held June 30, 2004 | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|------------|-------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| | | | BKs/BdPers | Non-BKs | Total |
| Group I 200,000 and above | | | | | |
| Harvard-Yenching Library | P | 1879 | 620,412 | 75,959* | 696,371 |
| Princeton | P | 1926 | 451,825 | 29,443 | 481,268 |
| California, Berkeley | S | 1896 | 423,370 | 40,000* | 463,370 |
| Yale | P | 1878 | 434,229 | 4,500* | 438,729 |
| Michigan | S | 1948 | 377,977 | 54,953 | 432,930 |
| Chicago | P | 1936 | 389,755 | 35,164 | 424,919 |
| Columbia | P | 1905 | 361,163 | 21,650 | 382,813 |
| Cornell | P | 1918 | 357,074 | 20,000* | 377,074 |
| Stanford | P | 1945 | 263,842 | 28,948 | 292,790 |
| California, Los Angeles | S | 1948 | 261,457 | 8,781 | 270,238 |
| Washington | S | 1947 | 248,939 | 1,386 | 250,325 |
| Pittsburgh | P/S | 1960 | 225,642 | 7,329 | 232,971 |
| Subtotal | | | 4,415,685 | 328,113 | 4,743,798 |
| Group II 100,000 - 199,999 | | | | | |
| Illinois-Urbana | S | 1965 | 162,015 | 8,656 | 170,671 |
| Ohio State | S | 1962 | 144,688 | 11,355 | 156,043 |
| Hawaii | S | 1930s | 145,805 | 9,972 | 155,777 |
| Arizona | S | 1964 | 154,183 | 882 | 155,065 |
| North Carolina | S | 1964 | 125,159 | 10,838 | 135,997 |
| Pennsylvania | P | 1938 | 135,012 | 0 | 135,012 |
| Indiana | S | 1960 | 130,338 | 1,671 | 132,009 |
| Kansas | S | 1964 | 124,311 | 3,897 | 128,208 |
| Wisconsin | S | 1964 | 126,650 | 825 | 127,475 |
| Rutgers | S | 1970 | 114,592 | 4,223 | 118,815 |
| Minnesota | S | 1965 | 99,249 | 3,000* | 102,249 |
| Subtotal | | | 1,462,002 | 55,319 | 1,517,321 |
| Group III 50,000 - 99,999 | | | | | |
| Iowa | S | 1955 | 97,693 | 2,045 | 99,738 |
| Brown | P | 1961 | 97,576 | 786 | 98,362 |
| California, Santa Barbara | S | 1967 | 88,632 | 1,000* | 89,632 |
| Washington, St. Louis | P | 1964 | 83,751 | 3,969 | 87,720 |
| Texas, Austin | S | 1958 | 74,981 | 1,659 | 76,640 |
| California, San Diego | S | 1988 | 71,045 | 4,867 | 75,912 |
| California, Irvine | S | 1990 | 73,137 | 948 | 74,085 |
| California, Davis | S | 1966 | 44,136 | 17,765 | 61,901 |
| Colorado | S | 1969 | 56,930 | 0 | 56,930 |
| Arizona State | S | 1966 | 52,516 | 633 | 53,149 |
| Subtotal | | | 740,397 | 33,672 | 774,069 |
| Group IV Under 50,000 | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|-------|------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Brigham Young | P | 1964 | 47,991 | 0 | 47,991 |
| Maryland | S | 1963 | 47,158 | 351 | 47,509 |
| Southern California | P | 1989 | 42,630 | 494 | 43,124 |
| Virginia | S | 1950 | 31,762 | 100 | 31,862 |
| Georgetown | P | 1950s | 27,573 | 100 | 27,673 |
| Michigan State | S | 1963 | 25,823 | 77 | 25,900 |
| Duke | P | 1929 | 24,153 | 1,111 | 25,264 |
| Florida | S | 1975 | 21,055 | 2,842 | 23,897 |
| California, Riverside | S | 1994 | 22,200 | 123 | 22,323 |
| Penn State | S | 2001 | 14,357 | 35 | 14,392 |
| Binghamton | S | 2002 | 10,063 | 80 | 10,143 |
| Subtotal | | | 314,765 | 5,313 | 320,078 |
| Total | | | 6,932,849 | 422,417 | 7,355,266 |

BKs/BdPers: Books (monographs) and bound periodicals.

Non-BKs: Non-book materials including microfilms, microfiches, cartographic/graphic materials, and audio-visual materials but not CD-ROM and electronic resources.

* In the original report, these six libraries did not break down their non-book materials by language (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean). The numbers used in this column were estimations made for them by the author.

The data in Table I show that, in 2004, these 44 libraries owned a total of more than seven million volumes of Chinese holdings. To help understand the data better, the author broke the 44 Chinese collections into four groups by size: Group I, 200,000 volumes and over; Group II, 100,000 to 199,999 volumes; Group III, 50,000 to 999,999 volumes; and Group IV, under 50,000 volumes. Each group contains ten to twelve collections. It is interesting to observe that Group I holds 64% of the total holdings while it accounts for only one-fourth of the total institutions. In fact, half of the total volumes for the 44 collections are held by the first eight collections.

In terms of geographical distribution, 14 of these collections are located on the East Coast, 11 are on the West Coast, another 11 are in the Midwest, and the southern region and the mountain states (Arizona, Colorado and Utah) each has four. Clearly, Chinese collections are spread throughout the United States but are more concentrated in the East Coast, West Coast, and in the Midwest. Another point of interest is that 13 of these collections reside in private universities while 30 of them belong to state universities.³ However, the total number of Chinese volumes in the 13 private universities is almost identical to the total holdings owned by the 30 state universities (3,559,110 vs. 3,563,185 vols. to be exact). One factor that may have contributed to this difference is that most of the collections in private universities were formed earlier than those in state universities. For instance, eight Chinese collections in private universities were established before World War II, whereas only two collections in state universities were established before that time. In addition to more years for growth, collections in private universities enjoyed, in general, larger book budgets than their counterparts in state universities and thus could purchase more books annually at a historic time when Chinese books were available at lower cost.

With more than seven million volumes in holdings, the American academic libraries collectively own a very significant Chinese collection. It is certainly much larger than what the country's public libraries hold, and perhaps is the largest Chinese collection owned by academic libraries in any of the world's non-Chinese speaking countries. The growth of this remarkably large collection, however, has taken time. Table II displays the growth of Chinese collections in the last 40 years for a group of 28 American academic libraries.

³ The University of Pittsburg is a private university but receives budget allocation from the Pennsylvania State government (by law of the State). It is therefore coded to be a Private/State institution and excluded from the comparison by type of institution.

TABLE II: CHINESE COLLECTIONS IN AMERICAN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES 1964-2004

| Institution | Type | Start Year | Year | | |
|--------------------------|------|------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | | 1964 | 1980 | 2004 |
| Arizona | S | 1964 | 14,800 | 58,725 | 155,065 |
| California, Berkeley | S | 1896 | 142,650 | 237,674 | 463,370 |
| California, Los Angeles | S | 1948 | 45,000 | 95,600 | 270,238 |
| Chicago | P | 1936 | 139,009 | 252,848 | 424,919 |
| Colorado | S | 1969 | 15,000 | 2,432 | 56,930 |
| Columbia | P | 1905 | 167,000 | 222,624 | 382,813 |
| Cornell | P | 1918 | 70,000 | 219,970 | 377,074 |
| Duke | P | 1929 | 3,700 | 7,860 | 25,264 |
| Harvard-Yenching Library | P | 1879 | 277,292 | 362,023 | 696,371 |
| Hawaii | S | 1930s | 53,761 | 73,660 | 155,777 |
| Illinois-Urbana | S | 1965 | 7,200 | 83,468 | 170,671 |
| Indiana | S | 1960 | 25,059 | 79,063 | 132,009 |
| Iowa | S | 1955 | 11,600 | 35,200 | 99,738 |
| Kansas | S | 1964 | 13,271 | 51,370 | 128,208 |
| Michigan | S | 1948 | 52,877 | 207,812 | 432,930 |
| Michigan State | S | 1963 | 700 | 10,740 | 25,900 |
| Minnesota | S | 1965 | 17,000 | 57,304 | 102,249 |
| North Carolina | S | 1964 | 5,000 | 41,232 | 135,997 |
| Ohio State | S | 1962 | 2,361 | 61,200 | 156,043 |
| Pennsylvania | P | 1938 | 25,000 | 59,413 | 135,012 |
| Pittsburgh | S/P | 1960 | 16,000 | 83,061 | 232,971 |
| Princeton | P | 1926 | 154,368 | 247,371 | 481,268 |
| Stanford | P | 1945 | 70,000 | 174,571 | 292,790 |
| Texas, Austin | S | 1958 | 250 | 16,837 | 76,640 |
| Virginia | S | 1950 | 30,000 | 21,400 | 31,862 |
| Washington | S | 1947 | 84,096 | 147,681 | 250,325 |
| Wisconsin | S | 1964 | 8,000 | 82,590 | 127,475 |
| Yale | P | 1878 | 75,000 | 205,683 | 438,729 |
| Total | | | 1,525,994 | 3,199,412 | 6,458,638 |

Dr. T. H. Tsien (1966) made the earliest survey on holdings of American East Asian collections. It provided data on Chinese holdings in 1964 for 50 academic, public, governmental and special libraries in North America. In 1980-81, the CEAL Task Force on Library Resources and Access did another statistical survey on East Asian collections and published its final report in 1983. Because there was no similar survey made for 1984, the data from 1980 is used in this comparison. Correlative data for 28 academic libraries that were surveyed by Tsien could also be found in both the 1980-81 survey and CEAL's 2004 statistics report. The data from these three sources were used to make the comparisons in Table II.

The data shows that during the 16 years of growth between 1964 and 1980, the total Chinese collections in the 28 libraries surveyed more than doubled. For these same collections, this figure more than doubled again between 1980 and 2004. When comparing what these libraries held in 1964 with what they owned in 2004, it is impressive to note that the total holdings possessed by these Chinese collections have increased 3.2 times over 40 years. During this period, the most remarkable growth occurred in the last 24 years. In

fact, taking the data from the two Chinese collections that were established before 1880—Yale and Harvard—one finds that the total volumes added to these libraries from 1981 to 2004 (567,394 volumes) is almost equal to what was collected during their first 100 years (567,706 volumes).

The Change in User Population

A quick analysis of the data tells us that Chinese collections in American academic libraries grew at a much faster pace between 1980 and 2004 than ever before. Multiple factors may have contributed to this unprecedented growth rate, but the most important factor was China's implementation of economic reform and the Open Door policy beginning from 1978-79. Since 1980, China's publishing industry has flourished. In 1980, the country published a total of 21,621 titles (new titles: 17,660) while in 1990, this number jumped to 80,224 (new titles: 55,254).⁴ For 2000, the annual total of China's book production grew to 143,376 titles (new titles: 84,235),⁵ and for 2003, 190,391 titles (new titles: 110,812).⁶ At the same time, the business routes for American libraries to collect Chinese publications were normalized, eased, and diversified. American libraries could purchase mainland Chinese publications directly from vendors in China, instead of having to go through vendors in Hong Kong. Over time, not only did more book export vendors become available throughout China, but many bookstores joined the competition for business with oversea libraries as well. These changes have shifted the balance of supply and demand to favor American libraries, and have made it easier to acquire books with improved services and sometimes discounted price. These changes have had a positive effect on the growth of Chinese collections in these libraries.

Although many changes have occurred in the last 25 years to impact the development of Chinese collections, this paper focuses on one change: the change in the user population. The primary mission for every Chinese collection in an academic library is to serve its Chinese studies programs on campus. These programs, which are often a part of the East Asian studies programs, conduct teaching, study and research on China and Chinese culture. The faculty members and students in these programs are the primary clientele for the institutions' Chinese collections. In order to support these programs, universities continue to fund East Asian collections in their libraries. Often, the focuses of an academic program help shape the special characteristics of the East Asian collection in its institution.

The primary mission and primary clientele for Chinese collections have not changed over time and will remain unchanged in the future. What has changed over time is the total user population that a Chinese collection may serve and the proportions of the primary clientele within this total user population. Three factors directly contributed to this change: 1) the increase of Chinese students and Chinese-American students in American universities, 2) the increase of Chinese immigrants in the local community around a university, and 3) the increase of local businesses and organizations that have an interest in, or a connection to, China.

It is a well-known fact that Chinese students in the United States have increased steadily since 1980. This was the beginning of China's implementation of the Open Door policy, allowing students to pursue higher education, particularly graduate studies, in foreign countries. Although the total number of admissions for Chinese students by American universities has fluctuated in the last 25 years, the overall number continued to steadily increase until 2002. (After the events of 9/11 in 2001, both the number of applications and admissions declined.) During this period, the number of students in the East Asian studies programs also increased. However, since the majority of the Chinese students specialized in areas other than East Asian studies and thus have maintained a much faster growing pace than the students in East Asian studies programs, it is safe to say that the ratio of East Asian studies students to Chinese students in other

⁴ Source of data: *Zhongguo chuban nian jian 1990-91* (China Publishing Yearbook 1990-91). Beijing: China Book Press, 1993. P. 688, 691.

⁵ Source of data: *Zhongguo chuban nian jian 2001* (China Publishing Yearbook 2001). Beijing: China Publishing Yearbook Press, 2001. P. 661.

⁶ Source of data: *Zhongguo chuban nian jian 2004* (China Publishing Yearbook 2004). Beijing: China Publishing Yearbook Press, 2004. P. 772.

disciplines has decreased during this period, though the change differs from one institution to another. For instance, this ratio may have changed from 1:3 in 1980 to 1:10 in 2004 in Institution A whereas in Institution B, the decline may be from 1:5 in 1980 to 1:40 in 2004.

Increases in the number of Chinese immigrants in the United States over the last 25 years are also well-documented, though the impact of such increases on each Chinese collection again differs. In general, the effects are greater for those collections found in state universities rather than those in private universities, and also greater in universities located in large metropolitan areas rather than those in smaller cities. As the Chinese immigrant population increased in the country, the population of Chinese-American students also grew.

It should be noted that not every Chinese or Chinese-American student uses the Chinese collections; many actually do not. The same is true for Chinese immigrants in the local communities. But the bottom line is that now there is a much larger user population, beyond the primary clientele, on and off campuses than ever before; and this growth is likely to continue.

The Unstated Functions

Understandably, serving local user communities other than the East Asian studies community is, at best, a secondary priority for Chinese collections in academic institutions. In fact, in many places, it is a mission that has never been stated or one that is greatly understated. Also, this is a topic that has not been discussed in the professional literature. However, it has not prevented the Chinese collections in academic libraries from interacting with their local communities, nor has it changed the fact that these collections did play a role—an indispensable one for many cases—in serving Chinese overseas and promoting Chinese culture in their local communities. The major functions that Chinese collections have taken in this particular aspect may be summarized as follows:

Information Resource Center Chinese collections are often viewed by users in their local communities as resource centers for information about China and Chinese culture. They come to a Chinese collection to look for things ranging from information about their families and ancestors that may be contained in local gazetteers, or books about *Yi Jing* to read for their own interest. The rich holdings of books, periodicals, newspapers, and more recently, electronic resources possessed by a Chinese collection, can meet these needs. However, access to the collection can pose a challenge to the unaffiliated local users. In general, collections owned by public universities are relatively easy for local citizens to access as compared to those owned by private universities. This is because state universities, which are funded by state taxes, are obligated to open their collections to the tax payers and thereby the citizens of the state. In these state universities, all citizens are entitled to use the collections on site, though they do not have the right to check books out. For private universities, the policy for accessing library materials by unaffiliated users varies. Generally speaking, the universities in smaller cities tend to be more liberal than those located in large metropolitan areas. Nevertheless, for the determined local user, there is always a way to access the collection. For example, an unaffiliated user cannot just walk in to the University of Chicago Library, but s/he could get an “Infopass”—a free five-day permission to use the library—from the Chicago Public Library System. Many public and private university libraries issue borrowing cards to local business companies and government agencies as a measure of outreach to local communities. This also provides a way for otherwise unaffiliated local users to use Chinese collections in these libraries. In addition, local users may benefit—either via phone, e-mail or in person—from the reference services provided by these Chinese collections to answer questions that relate to China or Chinese culture.

Chinese Culture Promoter Chinese collections in academic institutions also play a role, either direct or indirect, in promoting Chinese culture. For instance, many Chinese collections put out small book exhibitions from time to time; some even do it regularly. The theme of an exhibition could be a specific aspect of Chinese culture, a particular event, a famous author or celebrity, or a special collection that the library possesses. The exhibition could also just be the library’s newly acquired and cataloged Chinese books. Through these exhibitions, the library introduces a small piece of China or Chinese culture to its

viewers and leaves some impression of the country, her people and/or her culture on the viewers. Relatively large exhibitions have also been made by major East Asian libraries in American universities. These exhibits often showcase the library's Chinese rare books and special collections. The most recent example was the exhibition made by the Harvard-Yenching Library in 2003 in conjunction with the celebration of its 75th anniversary⁷.

Another good example of the direct involvement of Chinese collections with today's environment is the development of content-rich webpages, where information about the collection mingles with well-organized links and carefully prepared surfing guides. These pages often lead the viewers to a wide array of well selected Internet resources about China and Chinese culture. Indirect involvement can be provided by supporting local organizations in putting together cultural promotion activities. An example of this is to assist the local association for Chinese students and scholars in preparing for a Chinese New Year celebration by finding books on Chinese riddle and folk songs.

Home Link Harbor During the last two decades or so, the number of Chinese students and visiting scholars originally from mainland China, Taiwan, or Hong Kong has increased considerably in American universities. Today, this number is easily in the hundreds for a major university. Additionally, these students have family members: not only spouses and children, but often visiting parents as well. They too represent a group in the user population for the Chinese collection. To these users, the library is a place for reading hometown newspapers and their favorite magazines as well as a source of more serious reading on Chinese history, philosophy, or literature—from classical to contemporary. Their usage of the collection often accounts for a significant part of the total circulation for the Chinese collection.

For instance, when I was working in the East Asian Library in the University of Minnesota in the 1990s, the annual circulation of the East Asian Library's materials—books in Chinese, Japanese, or Korean—was about the same as the circulation number of the University's law library. The University's law school had several dozen faculty members and hundreds of students, whereas the East Asian studies programs only had about a dozen faculty members and a few dozens of students. However, the University had about 800 students from mainland China registered for any academic year during that period. Adding the students from Taiwan and Hong Kong to the group, this number was easily above one thousand. For users from this population, some took reading in Chinese language as a therapy to ease their homesickness. Others came to take books home as a way to pass time. Still others viewed the library as a place that could emotionally link them to their home country. I remember a few years ago, an old gentleman—who came to visit his son, a graduate student at the University of Chicago—told me “when I am surrounded by Chinese books and magazines in this place, I feel I am back home.” He spoke in Chinese in a low voice with tears glistening in his eyes. Indeed, for many users from the Chinese overseas population, a library filled with books in their native language was like a safe-harbor for their busy or sometimes lonely souls. Whenever they needed to have a break from their busy life, this was a place where they could go and enjoy some quiet reading time. For those who felt lonely or homesick, the place and the readings they did made them feel closer to home and their loved ones.

Historical Record Keeper Last but not least, Chinese collections often assume, to a certain extent, the function of preserving the historical record for Chinese immigrants. Ever since the early times when Chinese immigrants settled in America, newspapers in Chinese have been published in large cities where a considerable Chinese population was present, such as San Francisco and New York City. Other types of publications like journals, magazines and community or church newsletters were also produced by the immigrants and their communities. Most of these publications were, however, geared towards only their local Chinese communities, and not for wider distribution. Many were short-lived. To historians on Chinese immigrants, these publications are not only important documentations for their research, but also are often the only written records produced by a group of immigrants. However, due to their ephemeral nature and the fact that no institution has really committed to collecting them, few have survived. In some large cities where there is a Chinatown branch in the city's public library system, some of these

⁷ The Harvard-Yenching Library was formally formed in 1928, but an East Asian collection was established in the Harvard University Library in 1879.

publications may have found a home, and may have even been kept by the library over time. But this kind of arrangement is, at best, sporadic.

Chinese collections in academic institutions have also played a role in saving these important historical records for future research. In fact, many of these collections collect publications by and for Chinese immigrants. These may include overseas Chinese newspapers including those produced locally, books written by overseas Chinese writers, and Chinese language periodicals produced in the United States. For periodicals, they are three types: news magazines, literary magazines, and the journals produced by Chinese dissidents. All of the above are indispensable materials for future research on overseas Chinese. Through collecting and retaining these materials, Chinese collections in academic libraries did a service for overseas Chinese and their communities. However, more needs to be done in this area, especially with less known or informal local publications such as community, church or local Chinese language school newsletters. Libraries need to reach out to their local Chinese communities and ask them to submit copies of their publications for the libraries to keep. More also needs to be done to preserve the materials that the library already collected, especially local newspapers.

Conclusion

Chinese collections in American academic libraries own rich holdings of Chinese publications. Due to considerable increases in Chinese student population on campus and Chinese immigrant population in local communities, the growth of the users other than their core clientele has become quite substantial. However, providing services to those users remains an unstated mission. It is a long overdue task that East Asian librarians revisit this practice, to better understand the diversity and the need of this user population, and to discuss the pros and cons in serving these needs.

Without doubt, the East Asian collections must continue to make the needs of their East Asian studies faculty and students their primary priority. But serving the other user group does not necessarily contradict their primary mission. Indeed, with well-thought-out priorities and well balanced policy and effort, providing better services to overseas Chinese, especially those on campuses, should not undermine an East Asian collection's ability to serve its core clientele. On the contrary, it may not only help to expand the collection's user base and enhance its importance in the university library and on campus, but also give the collection a more active role and positive image in the outreach programs of the library and/or the East Asian studies programs to its campus and local communities. After all, strong interest and support from campus and local communities will only help an East Asian studies program to advance. A strong user base—in addition to a strong core clientele—for an East Asian collection can only help, not harm, its effort to fulfill its missions.

References

- The CEAL Statistics Committee (2005). "Council on East Asian Libraries statistics 2003-2004." *Journal of East Asian Libraries*, no. 135, 35-62.
- Tsien, T. H. (1966). "East Asian collections in America." In Tsien, T. H. (Ed.), *Area studies and the library* (pp. 50-73). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- The CEAL Task Force on Library Resources and Access (1983). "Current status of East Asian collections in American libraries 1979/80 (Final Report)." *Committee on East Asian Libraries Bulletin* no. 70/71, 68-81.