



10-1-2008

From the Editor

Gail King

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

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

King, Gail (2008) "From the Editor," *Journal of East Asian Libraries*: Vol. 2008 : No. 146 , Article 2.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal/vol2008/iss146/2>

This Front Matter 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 Editor

Some years ago I invited a number of librarians to write down memories of their years in East Asian libraries for publication in the *Journal*. Some responded, and their memoirs have been published in issues since then as the continuing series East Asian Library Pioneers. We have all enjoyed reading about their education, careers, and views of the growth of East Asian librarianship from the inside. Through reading the stories of their lives we've come to know about many events and happenings in the world of East Asian librarianship that would otherwise have been unknown to us, and to understand better earlier years of East Asian librarianship in the U.S., the challenges they faced, and ways they met those challenges. The stories are fascinating and a great treasure, a legacy and gift to all of us from those who took the time to write them.

We are fortunate to have in this issue two memoirs by Dr. T. H. Tsien, eminent Chinese librarian and scholar. In the first of these memoirs Dr. Tsien writes about his association with Joseph Needham, with whom he collaborated on the volume on printing in *Science and Civilisation in China*. Dr. Tsien discusses how he first became acquainted with Joseph Needham and shares stories of their association over the years. Many of Dr. Tsien's stories about Needham do not appear in the recent biography of Joseph Needham by Simon Winchester, *The Man who Loved China* (HarperCollins, 2008). In a second memoir, an interview conducted in Chinese and translated into English, Dr. Tsien relates his education, early experience as a librarian in China, and career as professor and Curator of the Far Eastern Library at the University of Chicago. In the interview he also speaks of his research and writing methods and of the importance of bibliography to chronicling the scholarly production of a field and providing a foundation for new research.

Such memoirs as these, and the others that have appeared in the *Journal* in past issues, are fascinating stories of East Asian librarians, each of them unique, each of them remarkable in particular, individual ways. These stories of dedicated work and achievements need to be remembered. They enrich our experience and understanding and help document the history and development of our profession.

But not all of the lives of East Asian pioneers are being written down and shared. Too many retire without leaving behind them a written record of their career and experiences. We are all the poorer for losing this legacy. I hope that we can all work together to save these memories. Please, as you near retirement, write down your years as an East Asian librarian. The writing need not be polished; the memories are what counts. If you know of a now-retired East Asian librarian who because of health or other difficulties of age or circumstance cannot write his or her own memoirs, please consider taking on the task of interviewing that librarian. Or translate them into English, as two of our colleagues did for the memoirs in this issue. This is work we all should share. These lives need to be recorded. So much will be lost if they are not.

Gail King
Editor, *Journal of East Asian Libraries*