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# From the President

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## **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

To centralize or not to centralize is a question that East Asian librarians have long grappled with, past, present, and no doubt in the future. The question persists: What is the status of the East Asian Collection within the academic library organization structure in North America? There are various existing models: totally centralized, totally localized, partially centralized/localized . . . .

During the 2016 CEAL Annual Conference, under the leadership of CEAL President Ellen Hammond, CEAL hosted an unprecedented presidential debate on the issue. Then, at the 2017 CEAL Annual Conference, at my suggestion, CEAL hosted a follow-up panel led by Vice President/President Elect Zhijia Shen to engage in further discussion on the subject.

In this issue of the *Journal of East Asian Libraries*, I am very glad to see a Special Section on Library Organization, which includes the articles that were developed based on talks by last year's panelists with the own pros and cons of the subject as it has played out in their own institutions.

When Ellen and I planned the presidential debate we believed that an open conversation and debate on the subject could help prepare our members and their East Collections to deal with the question by providing related information including pros and cons and available models and examples in a contextual way.

According to *Collecting Asia: East Asian Libraries in North America, 1868-2008* (edited by Peter Zhou and published by AAS in 2010), the first East Asian Collection in North America started in 1868 at Yale University. Based on the 2017 CEAL statistics report, there are 52 active East Asian Collections in North America that reported their related data.

The world is changing, and the old boundaries of East Asian Studies can no longer contain the changing world. Based on data from the International Monetary Fund, in 2018, the US is the leading country based on GDP, China is the second, Japan is third, and South Korea is eleventh. In 2020, we can expect to see a different picture when other Asian Countries get more attention in the world based on the projection of their drastically increased GDP, such as India, Indonesia and Philippine. We need to be prepared to face the change and get ready to deal with the same question about East Asian library organization. Hopefully, this issue of JEAL can be helpful.

Jim Cheng  
CEAL President