2-1-1982

Acquisition of the Mitsui Collection by the East Asiatic Library, University of California, Berkeley

Roger Sherman

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

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation
Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal/vol1982/iss67/2

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the All 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.
ACQUISITION OF THE Mitsui COLLECTION
BY THE EAST ASIATIC LIBRARY,
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

Roger Sherman
University Research Library
University of California at Los Angeles

Introduction

Not long after World War II came to a close, there was a burgeoning of interest
in area studies, which prompted many academic libraries in the United States
to embark on extensive acquisitions programs to obtain foreign books for their
universities. At the Berkeley campus of the University of California, it was
recognized that there was a need on the West Coast for a strong collection of
East Asian research materials. This led to the establishment of the East
Asiatic Library (EAL) in 1947 as a separate branch on campus. The first few
years at the Library were a period of intensive book-buying which called for
several "expeditions" to the Far East. In the course of searching for useful
items during one such trip to Japan in the fall of 1948, a representative of the
East Asiatic Library learned that an extraordinarily large and varied collec­
tion of Japanese, Chinese, and Korean books, manuscripts, maps, and rubbings
numbering more than 100,000 volumes was being offered for sale by the prominent
Mitsui family. In the following pages, I shall briefly recount how EAL came
to acquire these materials and present a short overview of the several indi­
vidual collections the Mitsui Library encompassed.

The mere size and scope of the collection were not the only factors that make
the story of its acquisition different from many others. Equally unusual were
the long, drawn-out, and rather delicate negotiations involved in securing it.
These aspects combined to create a very suspenseful series of events and per­
haps one of the more unique episodes in East Asian librarianship, which I think
merits being recorded. This account is based to a large degree on EAL's bulky
Mitsui acquisition file, a record of events the librarian years later appro­
priately described as "a sheaf of delicate, cloudy documents."

Berkeley's Chinese and Japanese materials, then estimated to be about 60-70,000
volumes, were largely an accumulation of gifts donated to the University by
faculty over a period of three decades. They were scattered in various places
and not organized in any consistent fashion. A number of gaps existed in the
collection as well, resulting in spotty coverage of many subjects. Dr. Eliza­
beth Huff was appointed in February 1947 to take charge of the organization of
the new library. At that time she was finishing her doctoral dissertation at
Harvard, following a few years of study in China and several months in Kyoto
on Harvard-Yenching Institute and Radcliffe fellowships. She was assisted in
compiling desiderata lists for Japanese titles by Miss Elizabeth McKimmon, a
person perfectly suited for the job, as she had been born in Tokyo, the daughter
of a Scottish-American missionary and a Japanese woman, and had received most of her education in Japan.

By the fall of 1948, the Library had made sufficient progress toward the resolution of preliminary organizational questions to permit Elizabeth McKinnon to leave for Japan on a book-buying trip. This was made possible by a special Regents' appropriation arranged by UC President Robert Sproul, an extraordinarily gifted administrator and helpful friend to libraries. Miss McKinnon also had a $7,500 grant-in-aid from the Rockefeller Foundation to purchase Japanese publications.

Elizabeth McKinnon left Berkeley on October 1. During her stay in Japan she visited innumerable bookstores, twenty-five public and university libraries, seven old private libraries, and a number of museums, spending most of her time in Tokyo, but making trips to other cities as necessary. She was assisted in her search by Imai Kichinosuke 今井吉之助, the curator of the Sonkeikaku Bunko 松枝閣文庫 (the collection of the former Marquis Maeda in Tokyo), to whom she had been introduced through Professor Delmer Brown of the History Department at Berkeley. Imai was described both by Professor Brown and later by Miss McKinnon as a very conscientious person with an excellent knowledge of Japanese books and libraries, and it was for these qualities that he was asked to be EAL's agent in Tokyo.

On December 8, 1948, Miss McKinnon learned from Mr. Imai that the sale of a certain private library was under consideration, and asked her if she would like to visit it in Togoshi 津郷, a section of Tokyo (in what is now Shinagawa ward). As it turned out, this was the Mitsui Bunko, the private library of the Mitsui family, which, until the end of the war, had been the most prosperous and influential family of merchants and financiers Japan had ever known.

The Mitsui Bunko was established in 1918 for the purpose of collecting and storing the records of the Mitsui family business all the way back to the ledgers used 300 years ago. It took over the function of the Mitsui-ke Hensanshitsu [Mitsui Archives] and was designated a unit of the Mitsui Gōmei Kaisha (holding company) research division. The library was not open to the general public despite the enormous importance of the materials it contained, so it only attracted the attention of a limited number of scholars. During the war the three-story reinforced concrete building in which it was housed was one of the few that survived the fire bombing of Tokyo.

Arrangements were made for Miss McKinnon to visit the library on December 19, accompanied by Imai. The curator, Yamaguchi Eizo 山尾栄藏, showed them the collection, but said that the catalog was not there, and that he would arrange to have it brought to the library so that Miss McKinnon could examine it on a second visit. Between the first and second visits, Imai was able to get an initial quotation of $57,000 for the estimated 100,000 volumes available for purchase. The library actually consisted of two wings, one containing the manuscript materials having to do with the family's history, a unique collection of about 120,000 volumes. The catalog Miss McKinnon looked over during her next visit on January 25 turned out to be incomplete: three of the eight parts—the maps, rubbings, and Korean books—were not listed.
There was not enough time to examine the catalogs completely. Nevertheless, Miss McKinnon came away from the library with the knowledge that she had made quite a find. Before she left Berkeley, she had been instructed by Elizabeth Huff to be on the lookout for a copy of the voluminous Yijo sillok 李朝實錄 , the famous and scarce annals of the Yi dynasty (1392-1910). Professor George McCune, the noted Korea expert, had once mentioned to Dr. Huff that he had the word of Dr. Charles Fahs of the Rockefeller Foundation that should a copy of the Yijo sillok be found for sale, the foundation would buy it for the University of California Library. Therefore, Miss McKinnon was astonished when, walking through the dark and gloomy aisles of the Mitsui Bunko, she spotted the 888-volume set, in perfectly good condition.

From the beginning it was understood that the negotiations were to be carried out in strict secrecy. This secrecy was necessary, the family said, because the head of one of the six main branches was unwilling to consider the sale of any part of the library. They requested as well that "the money, should the sale be made, not [be] paid directly to them but either held until they should ask for it, or deposited in the bank accounts of certain persons in the United States." This meant that throughout the negotiations it was necessary to keep the matter concealed from the rest of the EAL staff—about ten people—while working in their new, yet cramped, quarters.

Before leaving Japan on March 1, 1949, Elizabeth McKinnon was given a summary list of the contents of the wing of the library to be sold, enumerating the eight sections it included and the number of items in each:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mitsui Library Basic Collection</td>
<td>20,000 volumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gakken Collection</td>
<td>28,195 volumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(of Dohi Keizō)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Imazeki Collection (Chinese books)</td>
<td>19,838 volumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Motoori Norinaga Collection (2/3 MS)</td>
<td>8,694 volumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sūshin Collection</td>
<td>22,742 volumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Early Maps</td>
<td>2,000 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Korean Books (Asami Library)</td>
<td>6,737 volumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Rubbings</td>
<td>500 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>108,706 items</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(or 100,012 excluding no.4)

When Miss McKinnon received the list, she was assured that the University of California would have the chance for first refusal. As some point during the negotiations, it should be noted, number four on the list was marked "not available." Nevertheless, a certain portion of the Motoori family library, which had been sold to the Mitsuis by the son of the fourth-generation scholar Motoori Toyokai (1834-1913), arrived in Berkeley along with other parts of the collection.

Not long after Miss McKinnon had returned to Berkeley with the description of the books for sale and had discussed with Miss Huff the relative merits of the various sections, they agreed that the most outstanding of them were
the Asami Collection of Korean materials and the map collection. They talked the situation over with the University Librarian, who suggested that a letter be written to EAL's agent confirming the Library's interest in these two parts or the whole, and requesting whether or not the parts could be purchased separately, and, if not, what the vendor's offer would be for the whole library. Imai replied on June 6, reporting that no part of the collection could be sold separately and that the family had agreed to sell the whole collection of approximately 100,000 volumes for a sum of $45,000.\(^5\)

About five weeks later, on July 13, one of the most puzzling events of the entire negotiation process occurred. A package, addressed simply to the "Librarian, University of California," and with a return address of "Yale University Library," was delivered, containing six manuscript volumes of the catalogs shown to Miss McKinnon in Tokyo. Two days later a letter came, addressed again to the Librarian, saying:

"In accordance with instructions from Mr. Paul Blum of Tokyo, we are sending you the catalogue of the Mitsui Library which is for sale and which we have had here under consideration. You will find enclosed the brief list in Japanese, summarizing the six sections of the library."\(^6\)

It was signed "Donald G. Wing, Head of Accessions Department." The list did not totally agree with the one that Miss McKinnon had been given in Tokyo--the sections of maps and rubbings had not been included. It was learned a few days later from Professor Denzel Carr of the Department of Oriental Languages, who had been a staff officer with the Occupation before coming to Berkeley in 1948, that Mr. Blum was a staff officer with the State Department assigned to Tokyo and a Yale alumnus (as was Carr himself).

Spurred on by the thought of losing the find to another university, University Librarian Donald Coney and his two assistants, Douglas Bryant and Marion Milczewski, prepared a letter for President Sproul on the weekend of July 23/24, advising him that the collection could be purchased for $45,000 plus $15,000 for additional expenses, if they could act fast:

"...negotiations to determine price have been conducted in the greatest secrecy to avoid competition from other libraries in the United States and concern in Japan over the possible removal of a cultural treasure. We learned on 12 July that Yale had become interested in the library. We believe we have the inside track, but--if we are to acquire the collection--we should act soon."\(^7\)

As it was summertime, Sproul had to make a special effort to contact each of the University Regents to obtain their approval before committing public funds for such a large purchase. During the ten days it took to make hasty arrangements, EAL sent a couple of telegrams assuring Imai of a favorable answer, and on August 4 Miss McKinnon dashed one off to him which read:
"AFFIRMATIVE DECISION MADE. I ARRIVE TOKYO LATE NEXT WEEK."

Long and Arduous Negotiations

Owing to the delicacy of working, on the one hand, with the Japanese vendors (who, it was speculated, might not treat a female negotiator with sufficient seriousness) and, on the other, with the Occupation authorities, it was agreed that it would be advantageous to send someone along with Miss McKinnon to help conclude the negotiations. Professor Carr, who was familiar with the Occupation's administrative structure, having served as a staff officer in Japan, was asked to go in order to take care of any negotiations with the Occupation authorities which might become necessary regarding the export of the books. (At this point there was some anxiety over how to deal with the Occupation authorities in order to expedite the shipment of the books. Dr. Carr revealed in a recent interview that the source of greatest frustration, however, was caused not by the Occupation authorities, but by the constantly changing proposals, conditions, and demands introduced by the vendors or their representatives). The Library even went so far as to issue the two letters of introduction from President Sproul addressed to General MacArthur, though without any mention of the name Mitsui.

Meanwhile in Japan, Imai had done some detective work to find out how the catalogs had come into the hands of the Yale University Library. Apparently, he wrote, they had taken the following route: Shin Nippon Kirisuto-kyo Bunka Kyokai → Jōchi Daigaku → American in Japan [Blum?] → Yale. He went on to say that the Mitsui family had a certain special agreement with these parties, whom he referred to as "Line A," but that they were trying to sever their relationship with them owing to some disagreeable circumstances, and to maintain secrecy regarding their contacts with anyone else. Therefore, he added, the Mitsuis were asking EAL not to express to anyone their intention of buying the collection.

This was the ostensible reason for the secrecy, but it was not quite the full story. Because the Japanese government was under orders by the Occupation to divest the zaibatsu and the zaibatsu-controlling families of their assets, the Mitsuis found themselves forced to part with, among other possessions, a portion of their library. The arrangement with "Line A," it appears, was an unsuccessful attempt on the Mitsuis' part to sell the collection without notifying the Holding Company Liquidation Commission (HCLC) of the transfer. The primary promoter of "Line A" (a certain Mr. Mori) was not able, it was said, either to find a purchaser after several months of hunting or to pay the balance due on the library. The Mitsuis, therefore, turned to UC as a potential buyer.

These circumstances, plus the rampant inflation at that time (166% in 1948 over the previous year) and the fact that Japanese exporters were permitted only to receive yen (not dollars) for goods sold abroad, prompted the vendors to devise various plans to ensure that as little money as possible would be lost in the transaction. Their constantly changing plans, most of which I cannot even touch upon here, kept EAL in suspense for another year. Shortly after McKinnon and Carr arrived in Japan they were faced with a surprise request: would Berkeley be willing to engage in an "exchange" of publications via a certain Japanese "institute?" The Library was naturally unable
to agree to serve as a shipping agent, but later reluctantly acceded to
a proposal to have Charles Tuttle, the Tokyo bookdealer, serve as their
agent for sending American publications to Japan in exchange for the
Mitsui books. Eventually this plan for indirect purchase and the earlier
request to retain funds in the United States as well were completely
scrapped by the vendors when the HCLC approved their petition to sell
to UC Berkeley and to break off their contract with "Line A." (In doing
so, of course, they had no choice but to report the transfer.) After a
long delay for checking, listing, and packing the many volumes and the
addition of two more shipping agents, the collection finally made its
way across the Pacific on six vessels leaving Yokohama between the end
of June and mid-October 1950, with the last of the 485 cases straggling in
from San Francisco Customs on November 22.

While these shipments were bound to make a significant contribution to
Asian studies in the United States, by the same token there were those in
Japan who saw the sale of the collection to a foreign institution as
an impoverishment of Japanese scholarship. And they let their feelings be
known quite rapidly. Within five weeks of the HCLC approval, at least
two reports of the purchase had appeared, one a brief notice in the May
1950 issue of Rekishi hyōron,9 and the other an article in the Chūbu Nihon
shimbun of May 16, which was reprinted in the San Francisco Nichi-Bei
Jiji (Nichi-Bei Times) more than a month later on June 22.10 Their claims
that the sale would deprive Japan of a large number of would-be national
treasures were somewhat overstated. Certainly there were valuable items
(and particularly valuable in the United States) among the books, maps,
manuscripts, and rubbings purchased, but it is difficult to say just how
many could be considered rare enough to qualify for designation as
national treasures in Japan.

It is very fortunate, it should be noted, that this distinguished collection
did not become a victim of the economic extremities of the post-war period
in Japan, when many perfectly good collections were sold off to second-hand
book or scrap paper dealers simply because their owners could not afford
to pay the tax levied on the sale of scholarly research materials. This meant
that many collections were broken up and disposed of covertly to get around
the regulations.

Yamaguchi Eizō, who worked most of his life preserving the books at the
Mitsui Library, was very concerned to see that the collection be kept in-
tact once it left the shelves of the library. Miss McKinnon assured him
from the start that the collection would be kept together at a fine insti-
tution and made easily available to scholars. She also promised him that
the books would be housed in the East Asiatic Library and not scattered
throughout the general library stacks wherever the subject matter would
put them.11

This en bloc purchase, due to its considerable size and the scope of sub-
jects it encompassed, eliminated many deficiencies in EAL's then uneven
collection. It offered works in all three of the principal languages EAL
collects, with enough classics and reference works to provide a firm foun-
dation on which to build an even stronger East Asian library. It also
included two fine sections of maps and rubbings which have enriched EAL's
non-book resources as well. It was probably this collection more than anything else, in my opinion, that enabled the East Asiatic Library to be counted among the most excellent libraries of its kind in this country.

**Basic Collection**

This collection of books, numbering about 20,000 volumes, consisted of Japanese books covering a wide range of subjects, with strengths in history, economics, literature, and art. It also contained a number of good editions of the Edo period (1603–1867) and many reference works and files of scholarly journals. There were many standard works in modern editions and some recent (early twentieth century) publications.

Despite a fairly high rate of duplication, the collection did produce a number of quite unusual items. 《往来物》 were amply represented by a wide variety of titles numbering over one hundred. The term *ōrai-mono* refers to an early type of textbook used in Japan for elementary education, from the Kamakura period (1185–1333) through the early Meiji period (until ca. 1886). It took the form of a collection of correspondence between pairs of individuals, dated at convenient intervals throughout the year. These collections were rich in vocabulary and general information which any educated person at that time was expected to learn, and they played a very significant role in the education of the common people for several centuries.

One of these 《往来物》, entitled *Teikin ōrai genkai taisei* 廷訓往来総解大成 (4 parts in 2 volumes), was edited by Nagai Johei 永井周行 (1661–1731). This work has the same editor and title as an 《往来》 known to have been issued in 1702 (5 volumes), so it appears very likely that EAL's copy was also issued in the early eighteenth century. Ishikawa describes the 1702 edition published in Osaka as being one of the best researched and most learned examples of an annotated 《往来》 text.12

Another extraordinary component of the Basic Collection was the 600-volume Chinese version of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* translated by Hsun-chuang (d.664) and printed in 1384. This set of folding books comprises all of the Mahayana scriptures which interpret the meaning of *prajñā-pāramitā*, the attainment of perfect wisdom through religious training.

**Gakken Collection**

The second section among those bought from the Mitsuis was called the Gakken 鳥行 Collection. Gakken was the pseudonym of Dohi Keizō 竹村慶蔵 (1866–1931), a renowned pioneer in the discovery and treatment of skin diseases and professor of medicine at Tokyo Imperial University. As an avocation, Dohi was devoted to books. Aside from the medical literature he needed for his profession, he accumulated many books on the history of medicine. Also an avid collector of classics in literature, history, and philosophy, Dohi was particularly fond of reading *kan-shibun*, Chinese poetry and prose composed by Japanese. He is said to have been quite proficient at it himself and to have amassed one of
the largest collections of this genre in Japan. The most prominent strength of this particular collection, in fact, is the *kanshibun*—more poetry than prose—which, by my own estimate, contains a minimum of 820 volumes (since, for convenience, I counted cases as volumes), but there may be well over that number.

Through some background investigation I discovered that certain parts of the Gakken Collection are now owned by the National Diet Library, the University of Tokyo, and the Tokyo School of Medicine and Dentistry. Details may be found in my original paper, to which a reference will be found at the end of this article.

Among its rarities, the EAL Gakken Collection included an early edition of *Wakanrōeishū* compiled by Fujiwara no Kinto 藤原公任 (966-1041) and printed in 1648. Another early work from Dohi’s collection is a manuscript copy of *Ken'en Jippitsu* 藤園十筆 by Ogyu Sorai 萩生徂来 (1666-1728), one of the most eminent Japanese scholars of Confucianism and Chinese culture. According to *Kokusho Sōmokuroku*, there are only three copies of this undated collection of essays in existence, two in Japan and now one in Berkeley.14

**Imazeki Collection**

The Imazeki Collection was brought together by the noted Japanese sinologist Imazeki Tempo 今閏天彰, whose real name was Imazeki Hisamaro 今閏壽泰.15 Imazeki was born in Chiba prefecture in 1884. There his grandfather ran a private school where he taught Chinese classics to young people in the area. This is how Imazeki developed an interest in Chinese literature, and at a surprisingly early age. This fondness for Chinese literature remained with Imazeki throughout his life. In 1918 when Imazeki finally had his first opportunity to visit China, it happened that the Mitsui Gōmei Honsha, which had recently built a radio transmitter on the outskirts of Peking, was looking for someone with a good knowledge of the situation in China to provide them with up-to-date information. Under the sponsorship of Mitsui, he set up an office for his research work which had a library that eventually grew to hold as many as 100,000 volumes. Later the library was purchased from him by the company.

A Japanese typescript book catalog compiled at the Mitsui Bunko in 1939, which enumerates and classifies the close to 20,000 volumes in this library of Chinese works, accompanied the collection and is still kept in the office of EAL’s Chinese division. The seventy-one-page catalog contains approximately 1,418 titles which are classified according to the traditional four-fold classification scheme for Chinese books, plus a section of collected works (*ts'ung-shu*). The collection’s primary strength, and thus its greatest attraction for the newly established EAL, was in standard literary and historical works and in bibliographic and critical writings on them. This was a good, solid Sinological collection, although it had few, if any, notable rare items. It was all in Chinese, and all in traditional format. The Imazeki Collection comprised mostly Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1912) editions, with some early twentieth-century publications.
Motoori Collection

As was mentioned earlier, the Motoori Collection was at one point described as being unavailable for purchase. A certain number of Motoori books did, however, accompany the rest of the collection, although it is now close to impossible to determine the exact number of items received because the number shipped was not reported at the time of shipping, as it was for the other sections. The original offer placed the size at 3,660 titles in 8,694 volumes (one-third printed, two thirds manuscript). The number of volumes in arrearage and in the manuscript catalog at EAL is now approximately 3,000, so the number shipped to EAL would have to have been somewhere between those two widely differing figures.

The original Motoori Collection was the library of the well-known family of scholars founded by Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801) and distinguished for their important studies of early Japanese classics. The books were passed on from generation to generation, but were sold to the Mitsuis in 1928 by Norinaga's great-great grandson Nagayo 俊 （1885-1945) and his son, who were musicians and not scholars by profession.

It is said that among Motoori Norinaga's early disciples was Mitsui Takakage 三井高隆 . The two apparently lived next door to each other in Matsusaka, the longtime home of the Mitsui family, where Takakage headed one branch of the family. This acquaintance was of considerable consequence to Japanese scholarship, because Takakage lent Norinaga some of the financial support he needed to complete his prodigious work, the Kojiki den, a commentary on the Kojiki running to more than 40 volumes.16

With regard to the Motoori Collection, EAL became aware at some point that part of the collection was held back in Japan when the rest was sold to EAL. During the course of my research, I learned through correspondence with the library of the University of Tokyo that sometime around 1950 the Department of Japanese Literature there acquired a portion of the Motoori library as well, a portion which consists of holographic manuscripts of Norinaga, his successors and disciples, and related works amounting to approximately 3,500 volumes.

Although the personal writings of the Motoori family were apparently not included in the EAL portion, there were included from the Motoori collection many general works of value. Among the manuscripts, I am told, were several poetical studies worthy of note, including one of considerable interest to the history of renga. The EAL special collections catalog shows that there are 63 volumes of Motoori origin in that collection, the largest number from any of the various sections, if we exclude the 600-volume sutra of the Basic Collection.

Among the more interesting items discovered during a random survey were what appeared to be several seventeenth-century imprints such as a copy of Kitamura Kigin's Makura no sōshi shunshō sho (6 volumes, 1674), an annotated version of Sei Shōnagon's eleventh-century classic The Pillow Book; and, two different sets of Ryō no gige, the official annotated version of the Yōrō ryo 八条頼 , the eighth-century code of administrative law. One of these has manuscript notes dated
1774, which may mean that it was part of the 1650 edition listed in Kokusho sōmokuroku. Another noteworthy title, which, unlike the previous one, was listed in Kokusho sōmokuroku as being a "formerly Mitsui" item, was the first printing (1669) of the six-volume Kokin waka rokujū. This is thought to be the first anthology of waka in which the poems are arranged according to subject, grouped in five broad classes: the four seasons, the sky and weather, natural environment, human affairs, and plants and animals. Participants in the poetry contests (utaawase) popular at the time it was compiled (late tenth century) were normally restricted to a predetermined topic, so an anthology of this kind proved to be of practical value and was naturally imitated by subsequent compilers.

Sōshin Collection

Among the various sections comprising the Mitsui purchase, this collection of 22,742 volumes is the second largest, next to the Gakken Collection. It has the distinction of being the only one of the six sections of books to have been collected personally by a member of the Mitsui family, although, as we shall see later, the map and rubbings sections were also collected by Mitsuis—this same individual and his son. The collector, Mitsui Takatatsu (1845-1922), a resident of Kyoto, was the eighth hereditary head of the Shimmachi-ke or Shimmachi branch of the Mitsui family. He was described as being eccentric, a noted connoisseur fond of collecting all sorts of unusual objects as well as books. Takatatsu also went by the name Sōshin, and thus the collection he built bears this name, too.

Elizabeth Huff, in a memo she wrote to Mr. Coney shortly after she and Miss McKinnon had examined the catalogs sent to them via Yale, reported that the Sōshin Collection was strong in literature and history, containing many old editions which had by then become impossible to obtain on the market. It also had some early movable-type editions and several very early Chinese wood-block editions. Charles Hamilton, a former EAL staff member now with the General Library, recalls that the Sōshin Collection had a rather good section of local history and geography. He adds that more Edo editions were found in this section than in any of the others.

The diversity of the Sōshin Collection inspired Charles Hamilton to refer to it as a "great grab-bag." It was this quality of diversity that enabled EAL to eliminate many gaps in its Japanese holdings. It not only supplied books for the general collection; it also constituted a considerable addition to the manuscript collection and to the Murakami Library of Meiji Literature, a set of first editions.

Map Collection

The Sōshin Map Collection, you will recall, was one of the two parts of the Mitsui Library estimated by EAL to be of greatest value because of its rarity. Mr. Imai commented in one of his periodic reports to EAL that he considered the maps to be virtually irreplaceable, and, therefore, of much greater worth than the books the Mitsuis owned. The short description of the map collection provided by the family at the outset noted that this was a well-known collection in Japan, perhaps the most distinguished of its kind in the country. Maps were yet another of Sōshin's consuming interests. He indulged himself in
accumulating a great number of early maps as well as the Meiji maps of his time.

The shelflist catalog prepared by the Mitsui Library which accompanied the collection bears the title Sōken shoshū chizurui mokuroku 宋堅所集地圖目錄 . (Sōken was the pseudonym of Sōshin's son Takakata, who may possibly have added some items to the collection later.) Of the approximately 1,966 maps (in 2,049 pieces) listed in the catalog, close to 263 have been struck out with a line to indicate that they were not available for purchase (most of these have relatively recent publication dates). This left a group of just over 1,700 maps. They may be divided into three main sections: Special formats, geographical areas, and dochū 道中 , or travel maps. The first section contains: (1) Three pairs of seventeenth-century folding screen maps drawn and painted by hand, (2) five hand scroll maps, (3) two bound sets of maps, and (4) two hanging scroll maps. The second section, consisting of 1,619 items, contains maps of the world, parts of East Asia, and Japan and its various provinces, as well as about 50 meisho zue. The last section is a group of 72 dochū, colorful maps which indicate local points of interest at a glance.

The dates of the maps range from the mid-seventeenth century through the early twentieth century. As a rough estimate of the number of maps printed before 1868, it could be said that 15-20 percent are from this period, totaling some 250 to 350 items. What appears to be the oldest of the maps is one of Osaka dated 1656. This section no doubt constitutes the rarest portion of the collection, but, since a thorough examination of the maps has not yet been carried out by the East Asiatic Library, it is impossible to assess the overall quality of the rare maps which it contains.

Asami Library

This collection of rare woodblock and movable-type editions, manuscripts, and rubbings from Korea was assembled by Asami Rintaro 浅見倫太郎 (1869-1943), a Japanese lawyer who lived in Korea between 1906 and 1918 while serving in Seoul as a legal advisor and later as a judge for the Japanese Government-general. Asami developed a special interest in acquiring rare examples of Korean printing, although his collection contains a number of standard early editions as well. Almost all of the works are either from the Yi dynasty or are Yi editions of earlier Korean or Chinese titles. The vast majority of these were produced during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries; a handful date from before 1592.

Among the several thousand volumes in this collection, there was one set of books that immediately attracted the attention of Miss McKinnon when she visited the Mitsui Library. This was the huge 888-volume Yijo sillok, the annals of the kings of the Choson or Yi dynasty, which George McCune, the eminent Korea specialist, had once called "an indispensable source" both for the Yi dynasty and for general East Asian history. For the East Asiatic Library, intent on building a collection capable of supporting a program of Korean studies, it was a stroke of good luck to hear of the availability of such a treasure. At the time EAL purchased the Mitsui Collection, the Yijo sillok was extremely scarce, the only modern edition being a very limited photolithographic facsimile edition (30 sets) published by the
Keijō Imperial University between 1930 and 1932. The set Asami owned was from this edition.

The rest of the collection is very broad in scope. It has standard Korean works in both Korean and Chinese, the literary language throughout this period, and also standard Chinese classical, historical, and literary works in Korean recensions. In addition to these three major subject divisions, there are works dealing with religion, language, agriculture, medicine, astronomy and mathematics, geomancy and magic arts, fine arts, and other subjects. About one-third of the collection deals with law and government, Asami's chief interest.

Until EAL heard of its availability, the Library "[had] been able to acquire very few of such works as these, finding usually only modern works of history and literature and Japanese works on Korean subjects."21 This library of Korean books, therefore, represented an offer that the University could not afford to pass up if it was seriously seeking to provide adequate facilities for research in Korean studies. The purchase of the Asami Library made EAL the owner of one of the largest collections of its kind in the United States.

In order to make the Asami Library accessible to scholars in more than just the physical sense, Dr. Huff decided that it would be desirable to compile an annotated catalog of the collection. Toward this aim, in 1955 the Library engaged Chaoying Fang, outstanding among contemporary scholars in Chinese history and well-known for the major contribution he made to Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1943-44) and, more recently, to the Dictionary of Ming Biography (1976). The product of Mr. Fang's efforts, The Asami Library: A Descriptive Catalog,22 was published in 1969. This work, edited by Elizabeth Huff, is astonishingly thorough in its treatment of the collection's over nine hundred titles of printed books, manuscripts, and rubbings in about four thousand fascicles and sheets. The annotations are not of the "bare bones" type which, frequently found even in some descriptive catalogs, do little to place a work in historical perspective. Rather, they are by and large very informative pieces that not only reveal the general subject matter of each work but also pursue various biographical and bibliographic questions and historical events closely connected with the creation of a particular work. Fang's commentary is on the whole very readable and often quite fascinating.

Chōhyōkaku Rubbings Collection

Rubbings are elegantly represented in the Mitsui Collection by the Chōhyōkaku Chinese rubbings collection. Like Soshin's books and maps, this part of the 1950 purchase was collected personally by a member of the Mitsui family, Mitsui Takakata 三井高厚 (1867-1950), also referred to as Sōken. Takakata was the third son of Mitsui Takatoshi 三井高敏, but at the age of sixteen he was adopted as heir of Mitsui Takatatsu (Sōshin), and thus became the ninth person to occupy the position of head of the Shimmachi branch of the family. He held many key positions in Mitsui enterprises, yet had artistic and scholarly inclinations as well. Takakata was a talented calligrapher versed in classical literature and an amateur epigrapher with a particularly good knowledge of seals. It is not clear what the name Chōhyōkaku actually refers to, though it is probably either another name Takakata went by or the name he chose specifically for his rubbings collection.
The undated typescript catalog which came with the rubbings, *Chōhyōkaku shozō kodai Shina hiketsu hōjō takuhon mokuroku*, was compiled at the Mitsui Library. The catalog's thirty-five pages list about 828 titles in 664 volumes and 628 sheets, making a total of 1,292 items including a few duplicates. The dates of the inscriptions from which these rubbings were taken stretch back as far as the Ch'in dynasty (221-207 B.C.) according to the catalog, but Dr. Huff, who has examined the rubbings individually, states that "the earliest are three of the famous stone drums [in what is now Shensi province] that are presumably of Chou dynasty date [1122-249 B.C.], giving a text from the Shih-ching, the Book of Odes." The collection was arranged in chronological order according to the dates of the inscriptions. These dates cover most of the dynasties up to and including the Ch'ing (1644-1912), though most are earlier than the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. Many of the rubbings had been mounted a strip at a time into accordion-like bindings, pressed between boards covered with brocade and inserted into hinoki boxes.

While the monuments from which the rubbings were made are very old, the rubbings themselves are relatively recent. Almost all of the rubbings in the Chōhyōkaku Collection are of Ch'ing vintage, although the earliest one is claimed to be a Ming dynasty (1368-1644) rubbing, which means it is quite a rare specimen.

Around 1958 Kenneth Starr, at that time the curator of the rubbings collection at the Chicago Natural History Museum (now the Field Museum of Natural History), sent a several-page questionnaire to the major museums and libraries regarding the size and quality of their rubbings collections with the intention of making a national survey of holdings in rubbings. Starr's (unpublished?) findings were completed several years later. He wrote to Dr. Huff to say that, although the Library of Congress' collection was larger, he thought that EAL's could be considered the greatest in this country because, in Dr. Huff's words, it "... represented the greatest diversity of range in time, subjects, and provenance ..." 24

(This article is a summary of the author's MLS specialization paper, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, UCLA, 1980)

References


3. Elizabeth Huff, "Mitsui Library," July 18, 1949, p. 1, Mitsui Library Acquisition File, East Asiatic Library, University of California, Berkeley (materials from this file will hereafter be followed only by
the designation "Mitsui File").


6. Ibid.

7. Douglas W. Bryant to President Sproul, July 26, 1949, President Sproul, Correspondence and Papers (CU-5, Box 1184, University Archives, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley).


10. "Kaigai e nagareru Mitsui bunko; Kashi Daigaku e miuri; Kokuhoteki sonzai oshimu shikishitachi" ["Mitsui Library to be 'Washed Away'; Sold off to Univ. of California; 'Worthy of Being National Treasure' Lament Intellectuals"], Nichi-Bei Jiji, June 22, 1950, p. 5.

11. Interview with Dr. Denzel and Mrs. Elizabeth (McKinnon) Carr, at their home, El Cerrito, California, August 31, 1979.


13. The Romanized transliteration "Dohi" may alternatively be spelled "Doi" to reflect the euphonic change the name has undergone, but the earlier spelling has been retained in this paper because it was the one used by the doctor himself.


15. Although one letter in EAL's donors' file refers to him as Imazeki Toshi-mar, every other source I have consulted which provides the pronunciation of the name has cited it as Imazeki Hisamaro.


24. Ibid., p. 184.