Tribute to Thomas Lee on His Retirement

Wen-ling Liu
TRIBUTE TO THOMAS LEE ON HIS RETIREMENT

Born in China, Mr. Thomas Hsueh-po Lee received his early education in private tutoring schools where Confucian classics and other forms of classical literature were taught. He received a B.A. in foreign languages from the National Taiwan University, Taipei, in 1957. He then went on to study at the Graduate School of Education, National Chengchi University in Taipei. At the same time, he worked first as an English teacher at Taiwan Provincial Panchiao Junior and Senior High School, Taipei, and later as an editor for English publications at the Government Information Office, Taipei. In 1963, he decided to pursue an M.A. in Library Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, while teaching first- and second-year Chinese in the Department of Chinese. After receiving his MLS in 1965, for the next eleven years, Mr. Lee served as the East Asian Cataloger and Head of East Asian Cataloging at the University of Wisconsin. In 1977, he spent an eleven-month stint as the Head Catalog Librarian for the East Asian Collection at Yale University Library in New Haven.

Mr. Lee also acquired an M.A. in comparative literature at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, specializing in literary relations between East and West, while working at the same time. The topic of his thesis was “Hu Shih, the Autobiographer: A Study of Western Influence.” He has, over the years, continued his academic interest in autobiographies, which culminated in the “Bibliography of Modern Chinese Autobiographies” to be found on the IU Libraries’ East Asian Collection Web site (http://www.indiana.edu/~libeast/cbilio/)

In 1987, he was appointed as the East Asian Librarian of the Indiana University Libraries in Bloomington, Indiana. For the next fourteen years, Mr. Lee carefully and persistently built and maintained an East Asian Collection famous for its strength in humanities and social sciences. Under his assiduous care, the Collection presently contains almost 200,000 volumes of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean materials, including subscription to some 800 Chinese, Japanese and Korean journals and newspapers. His dedication to building up a renowned and substantial East Asian Collection has evoked the admiration and respect of many students, faculty and library colleagues who have had the privilege of working with him.

Given the financial challenges of collection development, Mr. Lee has been a champion in acquiring external funding to strengthen the East Asian Collection at Indiana. Over the years, he worked successfully with the East Asian Studies Center to obtain federal Title VI grants and grants from other sources such as the Japan Foundation for the further development of the East Asian Collection.

Among his numerous published articles, conference papers, and reports, he has two favorite projects. The first one is the influential AACR 2 workbook for East Asian publications (with Beatrice Ohta) published by the University of Wisconsin, Madison Libraries. This guide has been used as a national model for the application of AACR (Anglo-American Cataloging Rules) to East Asian materials since its publication in 1983. He is also the author of the valuable A guide to East Asian collections in North America published by Greenwood Press in 1992.
Over the course of three decades in the profession, Mr. Lee has served in various leadership roles in professional and national associations. He has served both as chair of various committees in CEAL and ALA (American Library Association), including most notably:

- Chair, ALA ACRL (Association of College and Research Libraries) Asian and African Section, 1985-86.
- Chair, CEAL, 1988-1991

In addition to his demonstrated leadership, Mr. Lee has played a mentoring role to junior librarians. He has always been willing to answer questions and to offer his views when requested. Because of both the breadth and depth of his knowledge in the field of East Asian studies and his acquaintance of our professional associations, his comments and advice are always sought after and appreciated. His support has been influential in advancing the careers of many East Asian librarians.

In addition to his professional expertise as an East Asian librarian, Mr. Lee is an accomplished performer of the Chinese musical instrument “Huqin”. He has frequently been invited either to perform the instrument to accompany Beijing Opera singing on the stage in major cities or to teach and demonstrate the beauty of the traditional Chinese opera music to students at Indiana University.

As much as we will miss Mr. Lee, we are happy for him that he will have more time to pursue his interest in the performance of “Huqin” and the Beijing Opera. We are also very sure that in retirement he will keep in close contact with the IU libraries and his colleagues in the East Asian library profession for many years to come.

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