

 PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

東亞圖書館
East Asian Library
and the *Gest Collection*

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NEWS AND NOTES: FOR THE FRIENDS OF THE GEST LIBRARY

ADVISORY BOARD

The staff of the *Gest Library Journal* has invited several eminent scholars in relevant fields to serve as members of a newly created Advisory Board. As can be seen from their names and present posts, they are well placed to offer advice on the journal's content, and to contribute news about activities in East Asian research libraries. They are being asked to serve five-year terms. Other members may be added in the future. We are grateful to these distinguished people for agreeing to assist us in improving the coverage and quality of the journal. Brief introductions to the board members, in alphabetical order, follow.

Cui Jian-ying. Professor Cui was introduced to readers of the *Gest Library Journal* in volume 3, number 3 (1990), where a translation from Chinese of his important article on the identification of editions of Chinese rare books was published. This issue carries a second article by Professor Cui, also translated from the Chinese, dealing with mistaken identifications of rare books, illustrated by examples drawn from the Gest Library. These articles are based on a series of workshop lectures presented at Princeton to audiences of librarians from various institutions, in the summer of 1989, when Professor Cui was visiting Princeton in conjunction with his participation in the planning of a union catalogue of Chinese rare books held by North American libraries. Head of the Division of Special Collections at the Library of the Academy of Sciences in Beijing, Professor Cui has for more than a dozen years been a principal figure in the effort to create a comprehensive catalogue of Chinese rare books held in the libraries of China. Professor Cui graduated from college in Beijing in 1954, taught college before joining the Academy of Sciences, and concurrently holds the post of professor at Beijing Normal University. Those of us who have come to know Professor Cui at Princeton hold him in the highest esteem, and have the warmest regard for his personal qualities as well as for his scholarly attributes.

Tai-loi Ma. Dr. Ma is the curator of the East Asian Library at the University of Chicago, one of the great East Asian collections in the United States. While earning his doctorate in Chinese history at the University of Chicago, Dr. Ma was for a number of years the assistant to Tsuen-hsuei Tsien, the dean of East Asian scholar-librarians in this country. Dr. Ma knows the Gest Collection well, having visited it often to conduct research; his advice to the *Gest Library Journal* will be that of an insider. It is difficult to classify Dr. Ma as a specialist in any particular field. He is typical of the

eminent sinologues of the earlier decades of this century in being a formidable expert on almost any aspect of Chinese civilization that concerns him. The quality that best characterizes his scholarship is perhaps the incisive critical judgment he brings to bear on the fruits of his meticulous research.

Matsuura Akira. Professor Matsuura, who earned his doctorate in the Division of Humanities at Kansai University in Osaka, Japan, in 1976, has been a professor at that university since 1981. A historian concerned with both China and Japan, he has specialized in economic history, and particularly in the history of trade, within and between Japan, Korea, and China, from the fifteenth to the twentieth century. One of the leading younger historians in Japan and well known to members of the *Gest Library Journal* staff, he will be able to keep us informed about scholarly activities, as well as library and publishing news, in Japan.

Yue-him Tam. While Professor Tam was working on his doctorate at Princeton in the early 1970s, he held a position on the staff of the Gest Library, and we are thus the happier to welcome him back among us as a member of the Advisory Board. After completing his advanced studies at Princeton with a doctoral dissertation entitled "In Search of the Oriental Past: The Life and Thought of Naitō Konan (1866–1934)," and teaching for a year in the History Department of Bowdoin College, Professor Tam returned to the Chinese University in Hong Kong, where he had been an undergraduate, to serve with great distinction as a professor of Japanese history and of all aspects of Sino-Japanese relations, while also holding the posts of dean of general education, later dean of students, in New Asia College, one of the constituent colleges of the Chinese University. He has also been the director of that university's Centre for East Asian Studies, and is a member of many associations in China, Japan, and Hong Kong concerned with Sino-Japanese political and cultural relations. Noted as a translator of scholarly works as well as belles lettres, he has to his credit ten books and dozens of scholarly articles. Currently he is a visiting professor in the Department of History at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, where for two years he will teach Japanese history and direct a program in Japanese studies.

Xian-en Ye. Professor Ye, who has undergraduate and graduate degrees in Chinese history from Wuhan University in Hubei (1962) and Zhongshan University in Canton (1965), is well known for his studies in the social and economic history of China's later imperial era. A professor at Zhongshan University for twenty years, he now holds the post of director of the Division of Economic History in the Institute of History, Guangdong Academy of Social Sciences, in Canton, and is currently an executive member of the Association of Economic History of China. He has been a visiting scholar at the University of California, Los Angeles, and at the East-West Center in Honolulu, and has lectured at a number of North American universities, including Princeton in the spring of 1990. His many publications include definitive studies of merchant associations in Ming and Ch'ing times, and studies bearing on the local history, also in Ming and Ch'ing times, of regions of special economic significance,

such as Huizhou Prefecture in Anhui Province, and Guangdong Province. Professor Ye has already rendered bibliographic advice and other assistance to the Gest Library, and to our graduate students. We welcome the opportunities that lie ahead to benefit further from his wide contacts and broad knowledge.

THE SPACE PROBLEM

The growing space problem in the Gest Library has plagued curators, staff, and users for several years. Readers will remember that in 1989 we published in the *Gest Library Journal* (vol. 3, nos. 1–2, pp. 56–64) an architectural study prepared by Cary F. Liu and the staff, predicated on the assumption that new space would have to be built, and that contiguous new space could best be achieved by adding a connecting structure on the south side of Palmer Hall. Although we are not abandoning that ideal plan, we are also much interested in the efforts of Antony Marr, the curator of the Gest Library, to evolve alternative solutions that might have a greater chance of being realized. Mr. Marr's ingenious proposal was set forth in an interview with the *Gest Library Journal* staff and is summarized below. Mr. Marr is not sure that his proposal would cost less than the alternatives, and the university authorities are now investigating the issues of cost and structural feasibility. We are grateful to Mr. Marr for this evidence of his devotion to the library's needs, and we publish his ideas here in hopes of stimulating further thought and comment from the Friends.

A POSSIBLE SOLUTION FOR THE PHYSICAL SPACE PROBLEM IN THE GEST LIBRARY: AN INTERVIEW WITH ANTONY MARR

It had been almost six months since Antony Marr had assumed the post of curator of the Gest Library when the staff of the *Gest Library Journal* visited him, asking him to comment on the library's most pressing problem: the shortage of physical space.

"The Gest Library and other Asian libraries in the United States," according to Mr. Marr, "have an average annual increase of about seven thousand volumes in their Chinese collections. The number of new acquisitions of Asian books will amount to well over ten thousand a year if the four thousand Japanese books purchased every year are counted, and the number of acquisitions is expected to continue to grow." The annual increase in the volume of Asian books has posed a serious problem to the libraries that acquire these books: where will the books be shelved? The number of books increases every year, but the physical space for storage seldom increases accordingly. The situation in the Gest Library is particularly serious: books are piling up along the corridors and lying on the floor in Palmer Hall. "Unlike some public libraries," said Mr. Marr, "which periodically sell their out-of-date collections to make room for their new acquisitions, the Gest Library, as a principle, only buys books and does not sell any book in its holdings." This policy aggravates the already serious shortage of space in the Gest Library.

The library's space problem, according to Mr. Marr, has received due attention from the university provost. After touring the library and studying the problem in person, the provost agreed to construct bin houses on the Forrestal campus, which, when completed, will provide the library with the space to store up to one hundred thousand volumes. The construction budget for the bins has been approved by the university authorities, and construction is under way. "The construction of these bin houses," stressed Mr. Marr,

is only a temporary solution to the space problem. It is satisfactory neither to the readers nor to myself. Moving books out of the library to the Forrestal campus has already caused inconvenience to our readers, making the access to and the locating of books more difficult. It is at best a temporary expedient, and in my opinion such a measure can be adopted only once. The reason is simple: at the rate the library is acquiring new books, the space made available in the Gest Library by moving one hundred thousand books to the Forrestal campus could easily be taken up by new acquisitions in five years. If a satisfactory solution still cannot be found, we will be faced with the same problem five years later, which will force us to move another hundred thousand volumes to the Forrestal campus. And we may have to do the same thing every five years. If this is to be the case, most of our holdings will eventually be stored on the Forrestal campus, and we may have to change the name of our library from the Gest Library to the Forrestal Library.

"This is not to say," Mr. Marr emphasized, "that we do not appreciate the help offered by the provost. The Gest Library is not the only library in the university with a space shortage. The same problem also exists in the art and engineering libraries. Librarians in the engineering library have to remove a book from the stacks whenever a new book is purchased. It seems to me, that for the time being, moving some of the Gest Library books to the Forrestal campus is a sensible solution to our space problem. At the same time, we librarians will try our best to minimize the inconvenience to our readers caused by this solution." So far about 450 boxes of books, amounting to about 32,000 titles, have been moved to the basement in Firestone Library. They will be shipped to the Forrestal campus as soon as the construction of the bin houses is completed. Information about these books has been keyed into the computer, allowing them to be easily located. Any book paged by readers will be called back to the library within twenty-four hours. And once a book is paged, it will be kept in the Gest Library. Only books that have never circulated will be stored on the Forrestal campus.

When asked if it were possible that a new building could be constructed for the Gest Library, Mr. Marr said:

To my knowledge, the university policy is to allocate more of its resources to the improvement of courses offered to undergraduates and not to construct new buildings in the near future. The municipality of Princeton also has strict zoning restrictions on the construction of new buildings on the

campus, since the sewer treatment plant and the sewer lines in this area are already operating at full capacity. It is therefore quite unlikely that a new building for the Gest Library will be built. However, this is not to say that there is no solution to the physical space problem that will both satisfy the long-term needs of the library and comply with university policy and municipal regulations. In my opinion, rebuilding the interior of the Gest Library is just such a solution.

The Gest Library now occupies two floors, and according to Mr. Marr the ceiling on each floor is about nineteen feet high. If the present interior were totally demolished, there should be enough space to allow the construction of two extra floors. The height of the ceiling on each of the four newly constructed floors would be about nine feet. The two extra floors and the compact shelving the library would install would double the current library capacity, providing enough space to store the library's new acquisitions for the next twenty-five years.

To Mr. Marr, this renovation plan is a feasible one. It does not conflict with the university's no-new-buildings policy and is therefore more likely to be approved. He has already discussed this plan with Donald Koepp, the university librarian, and the initial response from Mr. Koepp was positive. Mr. Marr's proposal has been referred to the Physical Planning Department, and a team of architects and engineers from the department is to conduct a feasibility study.

"However," Mr. Marr warned, "if this plan is authorized and carried out, it will cause further inconvenience to our readers during the construction period. The renovation would take about nine months during which the library would have to be closed and emptied for construction. Readers' access to books would be greatly reduced."

Mr. Marr planned to consult with faculty members and graduate students about this problem when the fall semester began and was confident he could gain their support for his renovation plan. "As librarians, we are here to offer the best service possible to library users. In my opinion, the realization of the renovation plan will in the long run best serve the needs of both the library and its readers. And we will have their support and understanding."

The Gest Journal Staff

FRIENDS OF THE GEST LIBRARY

The Friends of the Gest Library is a group of private individuals dedicated to the idea that an East Asian library resource like the Gest Oriental Library (the East Asian Research Library at Princeton University) must be known, supported, and encouraged in order to enrich both the aesthetic knowledge of East Asia and the growth of scholarship and contemporary information concerning that part of the world. Many individuals have already been active for years in guiding the Gest Library, and contributing their time and resources ad hoc. In 1986 they formed the Friends of the Gest Library in order to broaden the Library's support and foster communication among other interested parties.

As a group, the Friends sponsor colloquia and exhibitions on East Asian books, calligraphy, art, and their historical relationships. They secure gifts and bequests for the Library in order to add to its holdings items and collections of great worth. They disseminate information about the Library (and about other East Asian libraries) so that members and non-members alike can benefit from its resources.

JOINING THE FRIENDS

Membership is open to those subscribing annually twenty-five dollars or more. With that membership fee is included a yearly subscription to the *Gest Library Journal*. Members will be invited to attend special exhibitions, lectures, and discussions that occur under the aegis of the Friends. Checks are payable to the Trustees of Princeton University and should be mailed to:

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