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From the Editor

Volume ten, number one, of the *East Asian Library Journal* presents all the papers originally delivered at the “Visible Traces, Rare Books and Special Collections from the National Library of China” symposium held in February 2000 at the Queens Borough Public Library. This symposium was organized in conjunction with an exhibit of material from the National Library of China on display at the Queens Borough Public Library from December 10, 1999, to March 15, 2000. The journal is pleased to be able to publish these six papers on topics important to the study of the history of the book and of printing in East Asia.

The statements that follow by Gary Strong, director of the Queens Borough Public Library, and Philip Hu, editor of the exhibition catalogue, *Visible Traces, Rare Books and Special Collections from the National Library of China*, illustrate the strength of the cooperative interaction between the National Library of China and the Queens Borough Public Library and the demonstrated commitment of these two libraries to promoting awareness of the book in East Asia.

The transmission of knowledge, the many ways texts were used, the reproduction of editions and documents, and copying as a means of preservation and extension of culture are themes unifying the diversity of research presented by these six scholars of the book and reflecting the wide range of printed and manuscript materials in the exhibit. Translating, editing, and transforming these papers from symposium presentations to published articles took far more time than this editor, new to

managing the *East Asian Library Journal*, expected. I regret the delay in publication, but anticipate that you will find these articles informed and informative, and, I hope, worth the wait. I would like to express special thanks to Professor Frederick Mote for his willingness to offer help and advice in resolving many questions that arose during the editing of the articles for this issue and for translating the article by Chun Shum. Further, it is only because of remarkable and patient text editing by Barbara Westergaard and imaginative design and composition by Judith Waterman that this number of the journal has reached its final form here in your hands. I thank them for their consistent good cheer in working with me.

In the mid-1990s, Sören Edgren volunteered to serve as editor of the *East Asian Library Journal* at a time when the journal was in danger of ceasing publication for lack of an editor. Dr. Edgren brought to the journal a wealth of experience and expertise in the bibliography of books in East Asian languages. During his tenure as editor, the journal brought out volume eight in 1988 and volume nine in 2000 (a total of four issues), filled with articles that Dr. Edgren had gathered from his many contacts with scholars of the book in East Asia. I wish to extend thanks to my predecessor for keeping alive the vision of those who founded this journal in the mid-1980s.

In 1997 Dr. Edgren invited me to work as associate editor, and in July 2000, I became managing editor with full responsibility for the journal. Dr. Edgren continues his main full-time work as director of the Rare Books Project, a Chinese book-cataloguing project of singular importance, and has graciously agreed to serve on the editorial advisory board for this journal. For the next issue of the journal, he has promised to write a brief report on the progress of this work. And the journal also hopes to publish in future issues substantive articles arising out of his continuing research into the history of the book in China.

Although I began my work in the field of Asian books, paper, printing, and book history relatively recently, it has become a serious passion. My degree from Princeton is in Chinese literature, my dissertation on seventeenth-century Ming poetry. Over the past five or six years I have been researching the physical history of the book and documenting handmade paper in China. In 1998 and again in 2000 I designed and

taught a hands-on undergraduate history seminar-and-studio course, "The Book in China: History, Forms, and Transformations," at Bryn Mawr College. I feel honored to serve now as editor of the *East Asian Library Journal*, the only journal dedicated to the publication of research on the history of books and printing in East Asia, an important field of inquiry that, to date, has been sorely underrepresented in non-Asian-language publications.

When I became managing editor, the organization of the *East Asian Library Journal* was slightly rearranged to give the journal a more solid footing and future. The trustees of Princeton University continue as the journal's publisher; the Friends of Gest Library remain the major source of financial support. In addition, the East Asian Studies Program at Princeton has made the journal an integral part of its activities, which are separate from, but complementary to, the academic studies of the East Asian Studies Department. The support of the East Asian Studies Program consists of a sizable annual contribution to the journal's operating account, invaluable help from the office of the program and from its computer consultant, and office and storage space conveniently located on the second floor of the recently opened Frist Campus Center. This building, formerly known as Palmer Hall, houses part of the East Asian Library on its third and fourth floors, and is attached to Jones Hall, the home of the East Asian Studies Department.

The former advisory and editorial boards of the journal are now one single editorial advisory board whose members review articles submitted for publication to the journal and provide helpful assistance and advice to the editor. I rely on their dedication and expertise. With this issue we welcome three new members to the editorial advisory board. As mentioned above, Dr. Sören Edgren will join the board. Dr. Alfreda Murck is an independent scholar of East Asian art who lives in Beijing and whose scholarly work is familiar to the readers of this journal (see volume eight, number two, for "Misty River, Layered Peaks: Decoding Landscape Imagery"). Professor Wu Ge, head of the Rare Book Section at Fudan University in Shanghai, is a bibliographer and professor in the Ancient Book Research Center at his university. I hope to persuade him to submit articles for publication here on some of the many intriguing research threads that he pursues in the history of the book in China.

What can you expect from the *East Asian Library Journal* in its future issues? In July 2001, Dr. Ma Tai-loi came from his position as director of the Hong Kong University Library to fill the post of director of the East Asian Library and Gest Special Collection at Princeton, a post left vacant with the retirement of Dr. Anthony Marr in May 2000. I very much want you to get to know this scholar of history and of the book in East Asia, whose intellectual refinement and administrative acumen are transforming in a most agreeable fashion the atmosphere, the appearance, and the operations of this remarkable library of books and documents from and about East Asia. So, in volume ten, number two, you can look forward to an introduction to Ma Tai-loi and a description of the new face of the library.

That issue of the journal will also contain two or three scholarly articles on the book trade and book distribution in China. In addition, it will report on two book-related conferences held in East Asia in the last quarter of 2001, the first, on management and preservation of Chinese rare books, held at the National Library of China in Beijing in October and the second, on the history of printing and publishing in East Asia, held at Tohoku University in Sendai in December.

Several of our readers have written to inquire about the status of their subscriptions to the journal. When it is time for you to renew, I will send renewal notices, either as a separate mailing or enclosed with the mailing of a journal. Your renewals confirm your continued interest in reading what the *East Asian Library Journal* publishes on the history of the book and printing in East Asia. I am very much interested in hearing from the readers of this journal, with both evaluations of specific content and suggestions for topics that you would like to read about in its pages.

Preface

GARY E. STRONG

The written word has always been highly revered in Chinese culture. There is evidence of glyphs dating back some 6,100 years, and beautifully printed books were published in China hundreds of years before Gutenberg. Examples of exquisite calligraphy, writing, and printing are valued for their form, even today, as well as their content. It is appropriate, then, that *Visible Traces: Rare Books and Special Collections from the National Library of China* was arranged library-to-library, rather than through an art museum, since it is our libraries that are devoted to the written word.

The priceless treasures displayed in *Visible Traces* had not been shown outside of China in more than fifty years, and had never before been seen anywhere in North America. The exhibit was made possible through a unique interlibrary cooperation agreement between the Queens Borough Public Library, New York, and the National Library of China, which was signed in Beijing in October 1997, and renewed in New York in October 2000. The *Visible Traces* exhibit, catalogue, and February 2000 symposium on which the *East Asian Library Journal's* papers are based, are all grounded in that agreement, which also paved the way for the two libraries to exchange printed and electronic information and to assist each other in obtaining library materials and professional information.

Visible Traces now lives on in the beautiful exhibition catalogue,

and in the words of the accomplished scholars who made this journal issue possible. Although it was gratifying to have exhibited the National Library of China's treasures in a public library, we are also beholden to Princeton University's *East Asian Library Journal* for giving new life to this historic endeavor.

We thank our colleagues at the National Library of China for their professionalism and trust, which made the exhibit possible, particularly Zhou Heping and Sun Liping. Thanks also goes to our symposium moderator, Philip K. Hu, and presenters J. Sören Edgren, Robert E. Harrist Jr., Robert E. Hegel, Evelyn S. Rawski, Chun Shum, and Zhao Qian.

I would like to add a particular note of thanks to the generous sponsors who made the "Visible Traces: Rare Books and Special Collections from the National Library of China" symposium possible: the Henry Luce Foundation, the Starr Foundation, HSBC Bank USA, and the New York Council for the Humanities. Finally, we are grateful to the energy and enthusiasm of the *East Asian Library Journal's* Nancy Norton Tomasko, for making this project a reality.