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COLLEGE & RESEARCH LIBRARIES

news

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National Catalog of Asian Materials Needed

Report on the New York Conference for Asian Studies

*Submitted by
Ravindra N. Sharma
Reference Librarian
Colgate University*

Colgate University in Hamilton, New York, was the host to the New York State Conference for Asian Studies from October 10-12, 1975. Librarians with special interest in Asia had their own miniconference session on October 12 in the Case Library of Colgate University. Dr. Richard C. Howard, head of the Wason Library at Cornell University, spoke on East Asian library resources in New York State. In his paper, Dr. Howard discussed the reasons for the growth of Asian collections with special emphasis on East Asian materials, which included China, Japan, and Korea. He told the audience that at present there are about fifty institutions in Canada and the United States which have material on East Asia in their libraries. Speaking of New York, he said that "a 1973 survey shows that at present there are about half a million volumes on the Chinese language in New York." This represents about 10 percent of the nation's holdings, and Columbia and Cornell Universities have most of them in their collections. According to him, "there are 170,000 volumes in Japanese and 200,000 volumes in the Korean language, and most of

them are in the East Asia library of Columbia University. These figures do not include Western language resources or holdings of smaller colleges and universities in New York." He mentioned that the New York Public Library, St. John's, and the University of Rochester also have good collections in this area.

During his presentation, Dr. Howard complained that there is no precise information available concerning the East Asian holdings of many institutions in New York and other parts of the country. He suggested that a national union catalog of Oriental collections in the country be published. The Library of Congress put out a Chinese cooperative catalog in 1975 which is an accessions list of the Library of Congress and several major libraries' holdings on East Asia. However, it does not give complete information on the holdings of the American East Asian collections.

Dr. Howard informed the delegates that "preeminent among East Asian collections in the state is Columbia University. It has 360,000 volumes and constitutes the third largest collection in the country, surpassed in size only by the Library of Congress and Harvard University." He continued and said, "Outside of the metropolitan area, the largest concentration of East Asian material is located at Cornell University in the Wason Collection." According to him, "it is one of the foremost collections of materials on South East Asia and a major research resource on China."

In his concluding remarks, he mentioned that

the National Peking Library sends selective material to libraries on an exchange basis. For other material, the ARL Chinese Material Center in Washington is reproducing microfilm and xerox copies of those items which are hard to obtain from China. He encouraged users in New York State to borrow material on interlibrary loan through NYSILL for research purposes. Libraries outside New York State can borrow directly through their libraries. He is hopeful that at least regional catalogs of the Oriental collections will be published soon for the benefit of the researchers.

Dr. Arthur Ostein, assistant director, Center for Inter-Programs and Comparative Studies in the State Education Department in Albany, New York, talked about the audiovisual materials on Asia with emphasis on Indian material in the state of New York.

Mr. Gurnek Singh, head of the area studies and Asian specialist in the Syracuse University Libraries, was to speak on South Asian studies and library resources in New York State, but he was involved in an accident near Hamilton. He discussed in his paper South Asian studies and materials in the United States with special reference to the state of New York. He traced the history of South Asian studies in three phases; during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, from the second world war to the end of 1950, and finally the development since 1961. He described the role played by the committee on Indic and Iranian studies in reorganizing the teaching of South Asian studies in American academic institutions as well as in initiating the establishment of the Orientalia Division in the Library of Congress, which played a vital role in the development of future library resources on South Asia.

Mr. Singh discussed the impact of the second world war on the area studies as a whole, and on South Asia studies in particular in this country. While describing the PL 480 South Asia Acquisition Program as "the most significant period in the development of South Asia Studies and collections in this country," he discussed the background and history of the program underlining the tremendous impact the program had on American universities and their libraries interested in South Asia. He pointed out the current trend of diffusion of the South Asia studies from the university campuses to the high school and college campuses, and the challenge and responsibilities that the trend presents to those who are responsible for providing library resources to both the teachers and students interested in South Asia. He warned that "in the future we shall have to provide greatly improved collaboration among all libraries that claim to have better collections on South Asia." The regional conferences, national and regional catalogs of collections, and better

interlibrary loan cooperation should take the lead in this matter. Ved Kayastha, associate librarian of Cornell University Asian Collection, was called upon to speak briefly on the Cornell South Asian collection.

Speakers at the meeting on October 11 made it very clear that the Asian collections in the state of New York and in the country need better attention from the librarians and others for the benefit of the Asian scholars and other researchers. The Association of Asian Studies has a chapter of Asian librarians in their organization, and they meet every year to discuss their problems and achievements. Local and state organizations of interested librarians are also needed. ■ ■

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News editor: Mary Frances Collins, Assistant Director of Libraries for Technical Services, State University of New York at Albany, Albany. Associate News editor: Anna Dowling, Assistant Librarian, Acquisitions Department, Library, State University of New York at Albany. Editor: Richard D. Johnson, Milne Library, State University College, Oneonta, New York 13820. President, ACRL: Louise Giles. Executive Secretary, ACRL: Beverly P. Lynch.

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