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Rescue and Reproduction of Chinese Precious Documents

Pei Zhaoyun

Abstract

China boasts a rich heritage of ancient books and records. Unfortunately, age and lack of proper care have left their marks on many valuable publications, some of which can no longer be used today. Merely taking measures to protect the books and prolong their life is not enough to preserve them for future generations. The article introduces the methods of rescue and mode of work adopted by library circles in China to solve this urgent but very difficult problem. Essentially, the solution is to set up a national documents rescue organization that will exercise unified leadership, planning, action and standards and use microform reproduction on a nationwide scale to save our ancient books and records. This "Rescue of China's Cultural Heritage" project has already achieved significant results. The scale of its work and the amount of manpower and resources mobilized are all unprecedented. It is an entirely new undertaking in China and one that is the focus of world attention.

A History of Writings in Japanese and the Current Status in the Field of Rare Books in Japan

Yoshimura, Zentara

Abstract

The article traces the history of books and other forms of writing in Japan from 611 to 1868. The author then gives an overview of the current status of the rare book trade in Japan, covering retail outlets, book fairs for sales of rare books, private collectors and collections, and catalogues issued for displays and sales.

Towards a Collective Memory of Mainland Southeast Asia Field Preservation of Traditional Manuscripts in Thailand, Laos and Myanmar

Abhakorn, Rujaya

Abstract

Prior to the 19th century, all of the nations on mainland Southeast Asia existed as separate states of varying sizes but sharing a common complex culture of beliefs and practices that are rapidly fading away in the face of Western values and economic development. There are many historical examples of the sharing of culture and harmony which come to light as more efforts are being made to catalogue and preserve palm-leaf and other types of traditional manuscripts, especially those that are kept in monastic and private holdings. The article describes the recent efforts made by various government institutions in Thailand, Laos and Myanmar at preserving manuscripts in Buddhist temples in rural or provincial areas. The methodology used is a mixture of simplicity and modern technology, with an emphasis on popular participation in conservation. The exchanges of information and experience among the leading conservationists in these countries will make it possible to work towards a collective memory of mainland Southeast Asia that would lead to a better understanding of the region and its culture.

Destruction of Chinese Books in the Peking Siege of 1900

David, Donald G., Jr., and Cheng Huanwen

Abstract

Nineteenth century China suffered from a weak and declining central government, the incursions of Western interests, and a necessity to grapple with the demands of a modern national state. Several major movements signified disquiet among the masses of Chinese citizens. In the waning years of the century the Boxer Uprising proved to be the greatest and

costliest threat to the old order, because for 60 days in mid-1900 the legation quarters of Western governments came under siege by the Qing government and Boxer forces. During the siege, the Hanlin Academy, a repository of Chinese bibliographical treasures representing centuries of cultural accumulation, suffered destruction through fire and pillage early on. Utilizing a variety of sources, the article describes the incident, its historical context and the significance of its loss, and places the event in modern library history.

The National Diet library in the 21st Century: The Construction Plan of the Kansaikan

Chiyo, Masaaki

Abstract

For the National Diet Library, foremost in its drive for reform is the construction plan of a new facility, the Kansaikan of the National Diet Library, to be opened at the beginning of the next century. With its advanced functions, the Kansaikan is expected to work together with the Main Library in Tokyo, located 500 km. to its east, as a single institution. The article describes the basic operational functions which have been incorporated into the building plan of the new facility: 1) larger storage facilities; 2) document and information supply centre; 3) Asia resource information centre; 4) library cooperation; and 5) research, development and training in the field of library and information science. Also described are the Digital Library System Pilot projects, which have been designed to make the Kansaikan a digital library.

Library 2000: Its Impact on the National Library Board of Singapore

Ngian Lek Choh

Abstract

In 1992 the Minister for Information and the Arts set up a Library 2000 Review Committee to review and improve the public library system in Singapore. The Library 2000 Report was completed and accepted by the government in March 1994. The Committee defined the mission of the library of the future as "to continuously expand the nation's capacity to learn through a national network of libraries and information resource centres providing services and learning opportunities to support the advancement of Singapore". The author describes the impact of the Report on the development of the national library and public libraries, and significant events which have taken place in implementing its recommendations.

Research as a Basis of the Development of Standards for Libraries

Lynch, Beverly P.

Abstract

The article acknowledges the three general types of standards developed by the library profession: guidelines or models against which services are to be compared; rules for activities, and technical standards. It identifies the methods and processes used, the need to forge consensus, and the little objective research base which has influenced the development of standards. Most research has been to see whether the standards in place are used by libraries or their parent institutions, or whether there is interest in continuing to develop performance standards. Given the need to have technical standards in place worldwide, and given the continuing demand for accountability, standards development in technical areas will continue. Standards for performance of libraries will too; the process used will vary from country to country and the nature of performance standards developed will depend upon the state of library development in the particular country or region.

International Librarianship: An Agenda for Research: The Asian Perspective

Stueart, Robert D.

Abstract

The examination of librarianship in the international arena allows one to determine trends and to identify gaps in both theory and practice. Today the profession has certain advantages that were not accessible in the past, including the technology which makes it easier and faster to collect data and even observe both hypothetical and actual situations from afar. Research with international implications has the capacity to be much more complex and powerful than some other types. Dramatic changes in the political, economic, social and technological areas have affected the things that information professionals do and the way things are done. Add to this the language and geographical factors and one has a very fertile field for continuous, intense investigation. The opportunities to conduct research on different cultures, and economic and political structures can help focus on experiences with common problems. International or comparative studies in the Asian context offer an opportunity to observe and test, in a systematic way, the diversity that needs to be appreciated and explained in the world arena.

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