

# **East Asian Resources at the Harvard-Yenching Library**

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## **Abstract**

The Harvard-Yenching Library, established in 1928, is now the largest university library for East Asian research in the Western world. Its holdings at the present time consist of 947,000 volumes of books, more than 15,000 serial titles (5,870 are currently received), 700 newspapers (240 are current), 58,140 reels of microfilm and 15,660 sheets of microfiche. In addition, the Library maintains a photographic collection of approximately 18,500 items and some 3,000 slides. There are also 180 video/audio titles and 64 titles in electronic form. The Library's collections share certain common characteristics. That is, for each country - China, Japan, and Korea - they provide comprehensive coverage of history, language and literature, philosophy and religion, fine arts, and sources for the study of the modern and contemporary periods in the social sciences. Each collection, however, has its own unique features. This paper highlights the uniqueness of each of the Library's country collections.

## **Introduction**

In discussing Harvard-Yenching Library's research resources, it is difficult not also to recount the early history of the Library, for the latter shaped the development of the Library's collections in the decades that followed the Library's establishment in 1928. So, I will begin by briefly describing the circumstances that led to the founding of the Library.

Historians are fond of saying that the confluence of unrelated events often creates situations of which history is made. The Harvard-Yenching Library is a good case in point. Three separate events, spanning almost half a century, made possible the creation of an East Asian library collection at Harvard. They were the introduction of Chinese into Harvard's curriculum in 1879, the decision of Alfred

Kaiming Chiu to come to Harvard for graduate study in 1925, and the establishment of the Harvard-Yenching Institute in 1928. These totally unrelated events, each in its own way, contributed to the founding of the Harvard-Yenching Library.

In 1879 a group of Boston businessmen engaged in the China trade invited Ge Kun-hua (Ko K'un-hua), a Chinese scholar from the city of Ningbo with a *Xiucai* (*hsiu-ts'ai*) degree, to give instruction in Chinese at Harvard, for they believed it useful to train their successors in the Chinese language. A contemporary Boston newspaper hailed Harvard's "courage and enterprise in becoming a pioneer in this new area of learning," and predicted that "the day is probably coming when the hieroglyphics on tea chests and firecracker boxes will be as intelligible to the average Yankee boy as the signs over the shops of his native village are now." The small collection of books that was bought for Mr. Ge's courses, the first acquisition in any East Asian language by the Harvard College Library, marked the beginning of a Chinese collection. In 1914 two Japanese professors, Hattori Unokichi, a leading Sinologist, and Anesake Masaharu, a well-known Buddhologist, both of Tokyo Imperial University, came to Harvard to lecture and donated several important groups of Japanese publications on Sinology and Buddhism to the Harvard College Library, thus launching Harvard's Japanese collection. These two collections became the nucleus of Harvard's East Asian library, but they were not properly organized for use until 1927, when Alfred Kaiming Chiu, then a Ph.D. candidate at Harvard, was asked to help catalog them.

Dr. Chiu was born in 1898 in the town of Zhenhai in Zhejiang Province. As a boy, he never went to a modern school. Instead he was sent to a village clan school run by the family of his maternal uncle. There he was instructed in the basic Confucian teachings, including the Four Books and the Five Classics. After a few years of study at this old-fashioned school, he was sent to be an apprentice in the Hankow branch of Wenming Shuju (later the famous Chung Hua Book Company). Following the 1911 Revolution, he was sent to study "Western learning" at the Changsha Mission School. From there he went to Boone College in Wuchang, sponsored by the American Episcopal Church, on a scholarship. While at Boone, he studied foreign languages, history, and mathematics under professors from England, Canada, and the United States. When in 1920 Boone established the first library school in China, under the leadership of Miss Mary Elizabeth Wood, Dr. Chiu was enrolled in the first class of six students. And he worked during the summers as an apprentice librarian in the great Han Fen Lou (later known as the Oriental Library) attached to the leading publishing house, *Shangwu yinshuguan* (Commercial Press).

Following his graduation from Boone Library School and Huazhong College in 1922, he went to Amoy and became the first University Librarian of the University of Amoy. While there he studied Japanese, as Amoy at that time was under heavy Japanese influence. While acquiring books for the library he became a friend of Mr. Xu Xinfu (Hsu Hsin-fu), the manager of Guangya shuju (Guangdong Provincial Press), a renowned publisher of fine woodblock editions. From Mr. Xu he learned much about Chinese bibliography. At the University of Amoy he also was acquainted such eminent European Sinologists as Gustav Ecke and Paul Demieville, as well as some Chinese writers, among them Lu Xun and Lin Yutang, both of them would later become famous. In 1924 the University of Amoy sent him to study library science at the Library School of the New York Public Library (later the School of Library Science at Columbia University), from which he graduated a year later. In the fall of 1925 he entered Harvard's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences to study agricultural economics. While pursuing graduate work, he also volunteered a few hours a week at Widener Library in order to gain cataloging experience. In 1927, after he had taken his M.A. and begun work toward a Ph.D. (which he received in 1933), Professor Archbald C. Coolidge, Director of the Harvard University Library who also taught Far Eastern history, asked him to do something about the Library's Chinese and Japanese books. He accepted the offer to become Custodian of the Chinese-Japanese Collection of the Harvard College Library, and thus began his forty-year stewardship of what was to become the Harvard-Yenching Library.

The Harvard-Yenching Institute was established at Harvard a year later, in 1928, as an independent corporation in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by the estate of Charles Martin Hall, the inventor of a process for refining aluminum and founder of the Aluminum Company of America. The Institute was incorporated with a dual purpose: the promotion of higher education in Asia, particularly the study of the histories and cultures of that region, and the development of Asian studies at Harvard. As part of that program, the Institute assumed responsibility for the Chinese-Japanese Collection, and the collection, then numbering 4526 volumes in Chinese and 1668 volumes in Japanese, was transferred in 1929 from Widener Library to the Institute. In 1931 the name of the collection was changed to Chinese-Japanese Library of the Harvard-Yenching Institute at Harvard University, and A. Kaiming Chiu was appointed its first Librarian. (The present name Harvard-Yenching Library was adopted in 1965 to better reflect the expanded scope of the Library, then including Korean materials and Western-language publications on East Asia.)

These three unrelated events had thus combined to give birth to a library, but developing the Library presented a major challenge. East Asian librarianship in the United States was in 1928 an uncharted territory. There was no standard cataloging or filing systems, and there were no book dealers in either China or Japan properly equipped to supply publications overseas on a systematic and reliable basis. Fortunately, the Harvard-Yenching Institute was able to enlist the help of the Yenching University in Peking, a leading missionary institution in China and after which and Harvard University the Institute was named, to assist in acquiring books for the nascent Chinese-Japanese Library at Harvard. In this effort, a number of prominent Yenching University Library staff such as the late Prof. Gu Tinglong, the preeminent Chinese bibliophile, and some senior Yenching faculty members, including the late Prof. William Hung, a specialist on the Tang poet Du Fu, contributed their time, expertise, and advice. From 1928 to 1941 the Yenching University Library made duplicate purchases of many books, one copy for itself and one for Harvard, and many fine Chinese rare books were also acquired. Direct purchases were also made from the two main publishing houses in Shanghai, the Commercial Press and the Chung Hua Book Company, and from Isseido Book Store in Tokyo. The average annual book budget of the Chinese-Japanese Library in the 1930s was \$10,000, a very large sum in those days. This kind of support made it possible for the Library to institute a systematic acquisitions program. By 1930, two years after the establishment of Library, the Library's holdings had increased seven and half times, and at the end of its first decade the Library's holdings amounted to more than 110,000 volumes - eighteen times the original size. Today, in its eighth decade the Library's holdings consist of more than 947,000 volumes of books, more than 15,000 serial titles (5,870 are currently received), 700 newspapers (240 are current titles), and 58,140 reels of microfilm, and 15,660 sheets of microfiche. In addition, the Library maintains a photographic collection of approximately 18,500 items and some 3,000 slides. There are also 180 video/audio titles, and 64 titles in electronic form. This makes the Harvard-Yenching Library the largest university library for East Asian research in the Western world.

At first, the Library collected only in Chinese and Japanese, with an almost exclusive emphasis on the humanities. Subsequent expansion in Harvard's East Asian curriculum led to a similar expansion in the Library's collecting scope. Tibetan, Mongolian, and Manchu publications were added, as were Western-language monographs, reference aids, and journals on East Asia. A Korean collection was inaugurated in 1951, and a Vietnamese collection was added in 1973. Social science publications were given increased attention in the post-World War II years, and

collecting in this area has been greatly accelerated since the mid-1960s. Thus, a collection that was once predominantly humanistic has gradually evolved into a research library that encompasses East Asian materials in all of the disciplines, including, to some extent, the natural and applied sciences.

The Library's collections share certain common characteristics. That is, for each country they provide comprehensive coverage of history, language and literature, philosophy and religion, fine arts, and sources for the study of the modern and contemporary periods in the social sciences. Each collection, however, has its own unique features.

### **The Chinese Collection**

The Chinese collection currently stands at 535,000 volumes of books, 6,870 serials (3,290 are current), 590 newspapers (216 are current), 29,720 microfilm and 15,000 microfiche publications, 67 CD-ROMS, and 18 networked Chinese databases from the Academia Sinica in Taipei. It is the largest of all of the Library's collections, accounting for more than one half of the Library's total holdings. The collection has several unique features. It is very strong in traditional local gazetteers (*fang zhi*), collectanea (*congshu*), writings of individuals of the Ming and Qing periods, and rare books from the 12th to the 18th centuries. The local gazetteers number 3,858 titles which compares with 8,343 titles held by all libraries in the People's Republic of China, and 4,530 titles by libraries in Taiwan. 75% of the Library's holdings are county gazetteers (*xian zhi*), with Shandong, Shanxi, Henan, Shaanxi, Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces better represented than the other provinces. (See Eugene W. Wu, "The Harvard-Yenching Library and Its Local Gazetteers Collection and Other Related Materials: A Brief Survey" in *Chinese Studies*, v. 3, no. 2 (Dec. 1985), *Proceedings of the International Conference on Chinese Local Gazetteers*, Vol. I, pp. 369-376.) It should be noted that the Library also has been collecting extensively the "new local gazetteers" that began publication in the People's Republic of China in the late 1970s. Although these new publications, of provinces, cities, and counties, do not compare in scholarship or editorial erudition of the old local gazetteers, they do provide a wealth of information concerning post-1949 local demographic data not readily available elsewhere. Scholars of the history of the Chinese Communist Party have also found the detailed information given in these new gazetteers on pre-1949 communist underground activities in different localities, much of it came to light in these new gazetteers for the first time, extremely useful for research. In this connection it should be mentioned that the

Library's collection of yearbooks, of provinces, cities, and counties, published in recent years in China is one of the largest, if not the largest, in American libraries.

The collectanea (*congshu*) collection, numbering more some 1,500 titles, consists of writings of an individual, a clan, or a group from a certain region or period on a variety of subjects (some are devoted to a single subject) and many of which usually were not published elsewhere. Most of the Library's holdings are 19th century editions. The genre of *Wenji* ("literary writings") are not limited to literary works but also treatises on a number of topics from philosophy to history to politics and other subjects. These collections often are used as supplementary sources to the more formal compendia of official history and other similar publications.

The Library's Chinese rare books are probably best known among its collections. There are 30 Song (12th century) and Yuan (13th century) editions, 1,400 Ming (14th-17th centuries) and 2,000 early Qing (17th-18th centuries) titles. Among the Ming editions there are more than 170 titles that are not listed in any of the Chinese rare book catalogs that have been published in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the United States and Japan. And there are also some 70 surviving titles that were ordered proscribed or burned by imperial edict of Emperor Qianlong during the compilation of the *Sikuquanshu*. In addition, there are approximately 1,000 holographic and manuscript copies, including two manuscript volumes of the great *Yongle Dadian*, the first Chinese encyclopedia compiled by order of Emperor Yongle (1360-1424) and completed in 1408, with the participation of more than 2,000 scholars. The entire work, in more than 11,000 folio volumes, was copied in beautiful and flawless calligraphy, and only several hundred volumes are extant. The Library's also keeps a collection of personal correspondence of prominent people. In this collection is a group of some 800 hand-written letters, dated from the late 16th to the early 17th centuries, exchanged between Fang Yuansu, a merchant of means of Anhui Province, and his friends, some of whom were prominent personages, such as Qi Jiguang, the famous military commander. The Library's rare books from the Southern Song to the end of the Ming dynasties, numbering 1,433 titles, are listed in Chun Shum (Shen Jin), comp. *Annotated Catalog of Chinese Rare Books in the Harvard-Yenching Library, Harvard University* (Shanghai: Lexicographical Publishing Company, 1999). The early Qing editions are being annotated and will be published in another volume.

For modern and contemporary China a large number of primary and secondary sources are available for the study of the Republican period of 1912-1949 on the

mainland and of Taiwan since 1949 as well as the People's Republic of China. Much attention has been devoted to providing comprehensive documentation on the history, ideology, organization and other aspects of both the Guomindang (Nationalist Party) and the Chinese Communist Party. These sources on the modern and contemporary periods are complemented by the Library's serial and newspaper collections. For example, in the serial collection all of the important university journals; leading independent scholarly publications in many fields; representative popular magazines; and other publications on a variety of subjects are included. In the newspaper collection both pre- and post-1949 leading national newspapers are available, as are some pre-1949 provincial and local publications, some are quite complete. Post-1949 provincial newspapers, once impossible to acquire due to government prohibition of their export, have now all been collected, following the government's reversion of its earlier policy. For a complete list of the Library's Chinese newspaper holdings, consult the Library's home page at <http://hcl.harvard.edu/harvard-yenching>. The Library's Chinese serial holdings are listed in the *Catalogues of the Harvard-Yenching Library: Chinese Catalogue*, v.39 (New York, Garland Publications, 1986), and will be online when the Library's retrospective conversion project is completed next year.

Another unique feature in the Library's collection on China is its archival material. The most prominent item, in Chinese, is Hu Hanmin's papers. Hu, a revolutionary leader and close associate of Sun Yat-sen, was the first republican governor of Guangdong and a member of the Guomintang Central Executive Committee and one of the seven members of the Central Political Council. He also served as President of the Legislative Yuan. But his political conflict with Chiang Kai-shek led his house arrest in 1931 which precipitated the secessionist movement at Canton. His papers are concerned exclusively with the period after his release later that year. They contain several hundred hand-written letters to him, with his replies, from political leaders in various provinces seeking to form an anti-Chiang Kai-shek alliance with him, as well as from Chiang Kai-shek and other Guomintang leaders in Nanjing pleading him to return to government. Another interesting item, in English, is the diary of Tsiang Tingfu while serving as the permanent representative of the Republic of China to the United Nations in the 1950s. Other English-language archives on China at the Library include the archive of the trustees of Lingnan University (a missionary university in Canton originally known as the Canton Christian College), 1884-1952. The archives, in addition to dealing with the immediate matters concerning the College, and later the University, is also a very important source on the state of higher education in China and the political, economic,

and social situation in Canton in those years. The George A. Fitch papers, including those of his wife Geraldine Fitch, contain much useful information concerning the YMCA movement in China in the 1920s and 1930s, with which Mr. Fitch was closely associated.

Several very special collections on China must also be mentioned. The first is the Library's collection of Naxi (Nakhi) manuscripts in pictographic script. The Naxi are a minority people in Yunnan Province who have no written language, and instead use pictographs. The Library's collection, numbering close to 600 manuscripts, is described in Zhu Baotian, comp., *An Annotated Catalog of Naxi Pictographic Manuscripts in the Harvard-Yenching Library* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard-Yenching Library, 1997). Another is the collection of photographs of the renowned photographer Hedda Morrison. A paper by Raymond Lum, of the Harvard-Yenching Library, on the digitization of this collection will be presented at this conference. Last is the Tiananmen Archive. Established in the fall of 1989, this archive on the pro-democracy movement of that summer is now the largest in the United States. Some 750 handbills, petitions, and pamphlets distributed by the demonstrators and the government at the Tiananmen Square during the movement form part of the Archive. The other parts consist of approximately 3,000 photographs (1,000 of which are pictures of "big character posters)," over 100 videotapes and a similar number of audiotapes, including a number of Voice of America programs on the movement aired after the June 4th massacre at the Tiananmen Square. There also is a group of eyewitness reports, mostly by Americans who were in China at that time, and a collection of newspaper clippings and books, in Chinese and English, on the movement.

### **The Japanese Collection**

The Japanese collection currently stands at 254,000 volumes of books, 21,580 reels of microfilm, 4,420 serials (1,270 are current), and 20 newspapers (4 are current). It is rich in history, literature (particularly modern), and Japan's modern and post-World War II political, social, and economic development. The collection is also strong in Japanese works on Sinology and Buddhism. Works of such notable Japanese Sinologists as Shiratori Kurakichi (1865-1942), Naito Torajiro (1866-1934), Kuwabara Jitsuzo (1870-1931), and Yoshikawa Kojiro (1904-1980) and leading journals on Sinology are well represented. The 6,500-volume Bruno Petzold Buddhist Collection includes a number of books published in the Edo period (1600-1867) and some 200 manuscripts dating from the 14th century. There are four Japanese collated



editions of the Chinese *Tripitaka* (Buddhist scriptures) published between 1880 and 1934, one Japanese translation of the Chinese *Tripitaka*, and another of the Pali *Tripitaka*. A catalog of the Edo editions from the Petzold Collection and other Edo-period publications in the Library has been compiled by Prof. Masahiko Oka and Mr. Toshiyuki Aoki and published as *Early Japanese books in the Harvard-Yenching Library, Harvard University* (Tokyo: Yumani Shobo, Publisher Inc., 1994). Of all the Japanese-language materials in the Library the strongest, in terms of both quality and quantity, is the 15,000-reel microfilm collection of printed books of the Meiji era (1867-1912). The 120,000 volumes reproduced in this microfilm collection, from the holdings of the National Diet Library by the Maruzen Company, represent some 75% of all printed books of the Meiji period. As such, it is the largest collection of Meiji publications in the United States. The microfilm collection is open to scholars without charge, and copies can be made on a digital reader-printer in the Library.

Japan's colonial rule of Taiwan (1895-1945) and Korea (1910-1945) is well covered by extensive files of administrative and statistical reports issued by the respective governor-generals' offices. The microfilm of the archives of the Japanese Foreign Office, the Imperial Army and the Imperial Navy provide an excellent source for the study of the Pacific War (1941-1945).

The Library's strong collection on the Japanese economy is not confined to its post-World War II expansion but traces its features historically as well. For instance, there is a file of annual reports of the Ministry of Finance that stretches unbroken from 1875 to the present and a file of a foreign trade annual which began in 1893. Histories, company records, and reports of the major corporations such as Mitsui, Mitsubishi, and Sumitomo are all included.

The Library's Japanese serial collection includes all of the important Japanese academic journals, some have complete or near complete runs, other scholarly periodicals in the humanities and social sciences, representative popular magazines, etc. All serials, with holdings statement, are included in the *Catalogues of the Harvard-Yenching Library: Japanese Catalogue*, v.33 (New York: Garland Publications, 1985) and will be online once the Library's retrospective conversion project is completed. The Library's Japanese newspaper collection is not large, but many important publications are included such as the *Asahi shinbun*, from 1888, the *Nihon Keizai Shinbun*, from 1878, the *Mainichi shinbun*, the *Yomiuri shinbun*, and the *Sankei shinbun*. The *Manshu nichinichi shinbun*, published in Dalian, China is

complete from 1907-1944. For a complete list of the Library's newspaper holdings, consult the Library's home page at <http://hcl.harvard.edu/harvard-yenching>.

### **The Korean Collection**

The Korean collection now stands at 97,200 volumes of books, 4,650 reels of microfilms, 2,030 serials (820 are current), 50 newspapers (7 are current), and 24 CD-ROMs. The scope of the collection is patterned after that of the Chinese and Japanese collections, with history, language and literature, and social sciences being the strongest. More than one half of the collection is 20th century publications, and South Korea's publications dominate due primarily to the much smaller volume of publications from North Korea and the North Korean government's refusal to encourage or allow free book trade with foreign countries. Among the pre-20th century materials two groups are unique. One is a collection of more than 2,000 titles of *munjip* (literary writings) written in classical Chinese, which was used by Korean scholars until the end of the 19th century, and printed since the 17th century. The other is a collection of Korean genealogies and government civil service examination rosters. The earliest edition of the genealogies the Library holds was printed from moveable type and published in 1701, and the earliest government examination roster is a block-print edition of 1600. Data from these sources are invaluable for elite studies as well as studies of social mobility, for in addition to the candidates themselves who were seeking examination, the data also provide a variety of biographical material on the candidates' relatives and kinsmen. The Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints (the Mormons), as part of a world-wide program of preservation of genealogical records, has microfilmed the Library's Korean and Chinese genealogies for its collection.

The Korean serial collection, smaller in size than the Chinese or the Japanese serials, nevertheless contains all the important academic journals and the major publications in the social sciences. All pre-1980 serial titles are included in *A Classified Catalogue of Korean Books in the Harvard-Yenching Library, Harvard University*, v. III (Cambridge, MA: Harvard-Yenching Library, 1980) and the records of all Korean serials will be online upon the completion of the Library's retrospective project next year. The newspaper collection includes the most important titles published in Seoul and Pyongyang. From Seoul the *Tonga Ilbo* and the *Choson Ilbo*, both from 1920, and the *Chungang Ilbo*, from 1965. From Pyongyang the *Nodong Sinmun*, from 1952, and the *Minju Choson*, from 1955. For a complete list of the

Library's Korean newspapers consult the Library's home page at <http://hcl.harvard.edu/harvard-yenching>.

### **The Manchu, Mongolian, and Tibetan Collections**

The Manchu collection contains 3,450 volumes, the Mongolian collection 490 volumes, and the Tibetan collection 4,260 volumes. The Manchu collection, in addition to translations of Chinese Confucian classics, literature, history, and works on government, contains a number of original publications and documents in the Manchu language. These include the laws and regulations relating to the Eight Banners (Manchu military units), printed in 1742, and a genealogy of the Banner members printed in 1744.

There is also a 1708 edition of a polyglot dictionary in four languages: Manchu, Chinese, Mongolian, and Tibetan.

The Mongolian collection includes the 108 large oblong volumes of what was known as the "red copy" of the Mongolian *Kanjur* (a main division of the Tibetan Buddhist canon), printed in Peking in 1724. There are Mongolian translations of the Chinese classics and a variety of Mongolian-Chinese and Chinese-Mongolian translations. Contemporary Mongolian publications in the Cyrillic alphabet are not kept by the Library.

The Tibetan collection includes three rare editions of the *Tripitaka* of 1700, 1732 and 1933, Tibetan texts of other Buddhist works, and various dictionaries and grammars. The Library received sometime ago as a gift from the University of Texas all the Tibetan publications it had received under the PL 480 Program. The Library is continuing to purchase Tibetan publications from India, issued mainly by the Tibetan exiles there, through the New Delhi field office of the Library of Congress.

### **The Western Collection**

The Western-language collection currently stands at 41,500 volumes of books, 2,690 reels of microfilm, 625 sheets of microfiche, 1,256 serial titles (437 are current), and 32 newspapers (8 are current). Although the collection is ancillary to other, much larger collections on East Asia which are scattered through other units of the Harvard University Library, it does include all the major monographs and journals on East Asia plus translations of East Asian literary works, past and present.

There are also complete files on microfilm of such important newspapers as *The Japan Times* and *The North China Daily News*. Its holdings, including journals and newspapers, are recorded on HOLLIS, Harvard's online catalog (<http://hollisweb.harvard.edu>). For a separate listing of the Library's Western-language newspapers consult the Library's home page at <http://hcl.harvard.edu/harvard-yenching>.

## **Conclusion**

It is impossible to describe in detail in a short paper like this the contents of all the important research resources on East Asia in the Harvard-Yenching Library. But I do hope the above, however brief, helps to provide a better understanding of the major resources available in that library. It is a truism that libraries do not exist for their own sake. They exist for a single purpose, that is to collect, organize and preserve for use the records of the world's civilizations. Service is thus of utmost importance. High technology has made it possible for us to provide service to our users much more efficiently and effectively, and it certainly will continue to develop to an even higher level of accomplishment, to the benefit of the users. The unprecedented and incredible contribution high technology has made to libraries and scholarship notwithstanding, we must not forget that technology is the means to achieve an end, and not the end itself. While we continue to seek out new technology in service of scholarship, we must also continue our effort in building collections as we have in the past. For in the final analysis, what scholarship demands of libraries is the substance of information, and that substance can only come from what libraries are able to collect.