Library



"Books on the move": Rare Chinese collections at the University of British Columbia

Tools

LIU, Jing and BREGMAN, Alvan (2013) "Books on the move": Rare Chinese collections at the University of British Columbia. Paper presented at: IFLA WLIC 2013 - Singapore - Future Libraries: Infinite Possibilities in Session 95 - Rare Books and Manuscripts with Asia and Oceania.

Bookmark or cite this item: http://library.ifla.org/id/eprint/16

PDF (714kB)

Language: English (Original)
Bookmark or cite this item: http://library.ifla.org/16/1/095-liu-en.pdf

The process

PDF (883kB)

Language: Chinese (Translation)

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Bookmark or cite this item: http://library.ifla.org/16/13/95-liu-zh.pdf



PDF (589kB)

Language: Spanish (Translation)

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Bookmark or cite this item: http://library.ifla.org/16/7/095-liu-es.pdf

Abstract

English Chinese Spanish

"Books on the move": Rare Chinese collections at the University of British Columbia

This paper provides an overview of the Chinese Puban (蒲坂) and Pang Jingtang (龐鏡塘) collec¬tions, exploring their formation in China, their survival and eventual acquisition by the University of British Columbia, and their continued movement and transformation in their new home. Both collections were originally owned by Chinese elite families and contain very rare and unique materials. The Puban Collection, consisting of 45,000 volumes, best represents Canton and southern Chinese civilization, while the Pang Jingtang collection derives from Shandong Province and has connections with famed northern Chinese scholars. We identify several patterns of movement that have affected these collections: the coming together of the materials that make up the collections; their travels from a once troubled homeland to Canada; their recent resettlement from the Asian Library to the Rare Books and Special Collections Library at UBC; and, finally, their planned return in digitized form to their country of origin. Along the way, we examine highlights of the collections, their intellectual value for research and their emotional value as objects of cultural heritage. We also emphasize issues affecting the preservation and use of the collections. In addition, connections regarding both preservation and digitization between UBC and institutions in China are also described.

ITEM TYPE:

Conference or Workshop Item (Paper)

CONFERENCE DETAILS:	IFLA WLIC 2013 - Singapore - Future Libraries: Infinite Possibilities Session 95 - Rare and special collections in the Asian or Oceanian context - Rare Books and Manuscripts with Asia and Oceania Monday 19 August 2013 08:30 - 18:00 Off-site Track 4: Tools and techniques • Congress website					
DIVISIONS:	Division 2 Library Collections > Rare Books and Special Collections Section Division 5 Regions > Asia and Oceania Section					
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TRANSLATORS:	Spanish version					
	TRANSLATORS		AFFILIATION	COUNTR	Υ	
	SANZ SAN BRUI Resurrección	NO,	Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid	Spain		
	Chinese version					
	TRANSLATORS	AFFILIATION	AFFILIATION		COUNTRY	
	JIN, Xinxiu	Hangzhou Sp Hangzhou	pecial Literature Library Center,	China		
UNCONTROLLED KEYWORDS:	Nanzhou Library (南州 Library	書樓), Puban (蒲	版), Pang Jingtang (龐鏡塘), University	of British Co	olumbia Asian	
DATE DEPOSITED:	18 Jun 2013 15:03					
LAST MODIFIED:	01 Aug 2015 14:00					
URI:	http://library.ifla.org/id/eprint/16					

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