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East Asian Library Newsletter

News from the Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library

<https://east.library.utoronto.ca/eal-newsletter>



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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
LIBRARIES

CHENG YU TUNG EAST ASIAN LIBRARY

CHENG YU TUNG EAST ASIAN LIBRARY

FALL HIGHLIGHTS

By Hana Kim, Director, Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library

The Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library (EAL) continues to serve as a central hub for students, faculty, researchers, visiting scholars, and the local community in East Asian Studies and related disciplines. This fall, EAL hosted a range of events, including library orientations, tours, authors' talks, and discussions on artificial intelligence, among others. The library remains committed to fostering learning, research, teaching, innovation, and community engagement.

ENGAGING MINDS: ORIENTATIONS, LITERARY DIALOGUES & AI INNOVATIONS

I. Library Fall Orientations

As the 2024 Fall session began, we were excited to welcome both new and returning students in East Asia-related fields. In late August, we hosted an in-person library orientation and tour specifically for incoming graduate students in East Asian Studies. Led by EAL librarians, the session was designed to address the diverse academic and research needs of our students. In September, we expanded our offerings with an in-person Tibetan Studies library orientation for both undergraduate and graduate students, which included a comprehensive overview of the specialized resources available in Tibetan Studies.



**Above: Orientation for the U of T Tibetan Studies Students on September 25, 2024
(Image credit: The Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library)**

FALL HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

II. Jenna Tang in Conversation with Dr. Shana Ye: Discussing *Fang Si-Chi's First Love Paradise*

On September 23, the East Asian Library hosted a conversation with Jenna Tang, translator of *Fang Si-Chi's First Love Paradise* (HarperVia, 2024), originally written by Chinese author Lin Yi-Han. The event featured Ms. Tang sharing her insights on the novel, with the discussion moderated by Dr. Shana Ye, Associate Professor of Women and Gender Studies in the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies at U of T Scarborough and the U of T Women and Gender Studies Institute.



Above: Jenna Tang in conversation with Dr. Shanna Ye
(Image credit: The Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library)

Jenna Tang is a Taiwanese writer, educator, and translator, fluent in Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, French, and English. She was an invited featured author for Taiwan at the Toronto International Festival of Authors (TIFA) in 2024.

Fang Si-Chi's First Love Paradise is one of the most iconic works of Taiwan's #MeToo movement, serving as a powerful feminist manifesto that critically examines grooming, trauma, and the power structures that sustain these issues.

The event began with remarks from Larry Alford, U of T Libraries Chief Librarian; Jin-Ling Chen, Director-General of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (Toronto); Hana Kim, Director of the East Asian Library; and Dr. Shana Ye, who also moderated the event. Following the introductions, Jenna Tang provided a presentation on the social context surrounding Taiwan's #MeToo movement and the publication of the novel. She then engaged in a thought-provoking conversation with Dr. Ye. Topics discussed included the intersection of language, writing, and translation, the role of literature in addressing sensitive issues, and the portrayal of trauma, sexual violence, and grooming.

FALL HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)



Above: Larry Alford, Chief Librarian of U of T Libraries, giving opening remarks



Above: Jin-Ling Chen, Director General of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (Toronto), delivering congratulatory remarks



Above: Hana Kim, Director of the East Asian Library, delivering remarks and introducing the speakers



Above: An audience member asking a question during the Q & A



Above: An audience member asking a question during the Q & A



Above: During the book signing session

(Image credit: The Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library)

FALL HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

The event concluded with a lively Q&A session where the audience asked questions about translation choices, narrative voice, and the novel's reception. The conversation sparked meaningful discussions on these critical issues, and the English release of Lin Yi-Han's novel represents a significant addition to Taiwan's literary presence on the global stage.

The event attracted strong interest from U of T community members from diverse disciplines, as well as from the general public in the local community.

This event was generously sponsored by the Taipei Cultural Center in New York, the Ministry of Culture, Republic of China (Taiwan), and co-sponsored by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, Toronto; the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies at U of T Scarborough; and the U of T Women and Gender Studies Institute.

III. EAL AI Innovation Series: Transforming Classical Chinese Texts into Searchable Databases with AI

During the Fall Session, the East Asian Library launched its inaugural event of the 2024-2025 East Asian Library AI Innovation Series. This new series is designed to support our community in navigating our roles and operations while effectively integrating AI into our daily work and special projects. Our goal is to raise awareness of various tools and approaches that can enhance scholarship, particularly in East Asian studies.



Above: Dr. Guenther Lomas delivering a presentation
(Image credit: The Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library)

FALL HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

The first guest speaker of the series was Dr. Guenther Lomas, a U of T graduate and the founder of Sigtica, a company specializing in document intelligence and the transformation of unstructured data into structured databases. Dr. Lomas's work focuses on applying AI technologies to the digital humanities, particularly in the fields of quantitative history and cultural heritage preservation.

In his talk, Dr. Lomas explored the exciting intersection of AI and classical Chinese studies, sharing insights on how artificial intelligence is reshaping this field. He demonstrated how AI technologies can convert large volumes of unstructured classical Chinese texts—such as genealogies and Qing dynasty government employee records—into organized, searchable databases. He also showcased the workflow designed to process millions of pages of historical texts, highlighting the complexities of layout identification and the precision needed for effective text extraction.

Dr. Lomas discussed key technologies, including customized Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and Named Entity Recognition (NER) models, illustrating how these innovations significantly improve data extraction accuracy and enhance accessibility.



**Above: Audience members asking questions during the Q & A
(Image credit: The Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library)**

In this event, faculty, undergraduate and graduate students in East Asian Studies, as well as those in the Study of Religion, History, and other related fields, along with library staff, actively participated, engaging in thoughtful discussions and posing many insightful questions.

FOSTERING SCHOLARSHIP AND STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

As a key intellectual and cultural hub on campus, the East Asian Library supports students, faculty, researchers, and the broader community in East Asian Studies, related disciplines, and Asian Canadian Studies. This fall, we continued to foster academic growth and scholarly exploration through a range of initiatives. Our efforts focused on enhancing learning experiences and building meaningful collaborations within the University community and with external organizations, enriching and expanding opportunities for intellectual engagement.

FALL HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

I. Enhancing Teaching and Learning through EAL Resources

During the fall, the EAL offered comprehensive support for teaching and learning initiatives, including organizing subject-specific library tours for students in the Department of East Asian Studies' Chinese language courses. Furthermore, the library supported the weekly Korean Reading Club by providing access to its extensive reading collection and contributed to the Chinese art history course by facilitating students' consultation of our special collection of Chinese paintings and art throughout the fall term.

Supporting Professor Nathan Vedal's Classes

In Professor Nathan Vedal's courses, EAS458 Classical Chinese II and EAS1542 Manchu Language and History, students had the unique opportunity to engage directly with rare materials, including items from the Mu Collection—a special collection of rare books housed in the East Asian Library, and a Tibetan manuscript from the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.

This collaboration between Professor Vedal and the East Asian Library exemplifies a pedagogy centred on experiential learning, offering students access to rare texts and artifacts that deepen their understanding of East Asian languages, history, and culture. It encourages active engagement with historical materials, enhancing research skills and highlighting the scholarly and educational significance of these works in innovative and meaningful ways. (A. Ip)



Above: Students from Professor Nathan Vedal's class, EAS458 Classical Chinese II, explore EAL's Chinese rare book collection as Dr. Stephen Qiao, former Chinese Studies Librarian, provided insights into the rare books in the East Asian Library Seminar Room on November 14, 2024.

(Image credit: The Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library)

FALL HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

II. Film Screening Series: *Uncovering Memories: Violence, Cold War, and East Asia*

From September to October 2024, the East Asian Library, as one of the main sponsors, proudly supported the film screening series *Uncovering Memories: Violence, Cold War, and East Asia*. This series explored the complex experiences and memories surrounding violence, imperialism, and the Cold War in East Asia.

The screenings were organized by three U of T doctoral students: Sung Soo Lee, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of East Asian Studies; Yehji Jeong, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History; and Sijin Paek, Ph.D. student in the Department of East Asian Studies.

The films critically examined a few significant themes, including the resistance of a Japanese armed group against neo-imperialism (*East Asia Anti-Japan Armed Front*), the unrecorded memories of women in U.S. camp towns in South Korea (*The Pregnant Tree and the Goblin*), and the herstory of the April Third Incident, spanning Japan, South Korea, and North Korea (*Soup and Ideology*). These screenings highlighted the enduring impacts of state violence and socio-cultural trauma, sparking vital discussions on understanding the past and its ongoing effects in contemporary society.

The post-screening discussions were deeply engaging, offering valuable insights and contributing to the success of this large-scale program.



Above: At the screening of *Soup and Ideology*, in conversation with Dr. Janet Poole, Distinguished Professor of the Humanities and Chair of the Department of East Asian Studies, and Sung Soo Lee, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of East Asian Studies, on October 12, 2024

(Image credit: Event organizers and sponsors of the *Uncovering Memories: Violence, Cold War, and East Asia* series)

FALL HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

The screenings were held at two locations on the U of T campus:

- *East Asia Anti-Japan Armed Front* – September 14, Innis Town Hall
Moderator: Yehji Jeong; Commentator: Mirye Kim (director)
- *The Pregnant Tree and the Goblin* – September 28, William Doo Auditorium
Moderator: Sijin Paek; Commentator: Lisa Yoneyama
- *Soup and Ideology* – October 12, William Doo Auditorium
Moderator: Sung Soo Lee; Commentator: Janet Poole

The series was sponsored by several U of T departments and institutes, including the Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library, Department of East Asian Studies, David Chu Program in Asia-Pacific Studies, Cinema Studies Institute, Jackman Humanities Institute, and Women & Gender Studies Institute.

III. EAL Co-presents *Before the Coffee Gets Cold* (2018) with the Japan Foundation, Toronto

In mid-September of every year, EAL has the pleasure to partner with the Japan Foundation, Toronto, in welcoming and hosting literary authors who take part in the Toronto International Festival of Authors (TIFA). This year's featured speaker was Toshikazu Kawaguchi.

Born in Osaka, Japan in 1971, Kawaguchi is a playwright, director, and author. His play *Before the Coffee Gets Cold* won the grand prize at the 10th Sugunami Drama Festival. The novel adaptation of the play was nominated for the 2017 Japan Booksellers' Award and was adapted into a Japanese feature film the following year. In 2021, a Hollywood studio acquired the adaptation rights to the novel. The novel series has now reached its fifth volume and has been translated into over 46 languages, with total sales exceeding 6 million copies.



Above: Toshikazu Kawaguchi (centre) at the Japan Foundation, Toronto, event on Sep. 26, 2024
(Image credit: Fabiano Rocha)

FALL HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

In the event held on September 26, 2024 at the Japan Foundation, Toronto, Kawaguchi shared his experiences with writing across genres. He spoke of the challenges of adapting the original play into a novel and how his inspiration is drawn from the people who surround him – his mother in particular. Mr. Kawaguchi is an incredibly engaging speaker who radiates positive energy. Lessons of kindness, love, working through grief, healing, happiness and positivity are common themes in his works.



Above: *Kōhi ga samenai uchi ni* (2018)

(Image source: Japan Foundation, Toronto)



Above: "*Kōhi ga samenai uchi ni*" shirīzu

(Image credit: Fabiano Rocha; Dust jacket design © Sanmāku Shuppan)

EAL also co-presented with the Japan Foundation, Toronto, a film screening of *コーヒーが冷めないうちに* (*Before the Coffee Gets Cold*, 2018) – a movie adaptation of Kawaguchi's first novel that was also adapted from the original play with the same title. The event was held at the Innis Town Hall on September 28, 2024. Over 200 people were in attendance. (F. Rocha)

Kawaguchi's books from the "*Kōhi ga samenai uchi ni*" shirīzu 「コーヒーが冷めないうちに」シリーズ (in Japanese) can be found in the East Asian Library stacks under literary author call number: [PL872.5 .A92](#). (F. Rocha)

Sources consulted:

Alter, Alexandra. "In Tumultuous Times, Readers Turn to 'Healing Fiction.'" *New York Times*, 1 Nov. 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/07/books/healing-fiction-japan-korea-before-the-coffee-gets-cold.html>. Accessed 13 December 2024.

Japan Foundation, Toronto. "Curtain Up to a New Chapter: KAWAGUCHI Toshikazu's journey of storytelling across genres." <https://tr.jpf.go.jp/event/curtain-up-to-a-new-chapter/>. Accessed 13 December 2024.

NOTABLE ACQUISITIONS

CHINESE RESOURCE:

Sheng rong hua yu dan 生榮化瘀丹, a Chinese Woodblock Sample

A unique woodblock for printing flyers or advertisements for “生榮化瘀丹” (*Sheng rong hua yu dan*, Pills for Revitalizing the Blood & Transforming Its Stagnation), a traditional Chinese gynecological medicine, has been acquired by the Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library recently for research purposes.

The woodblock is square in shape with dimensions of 40 x 40 x 2 cm. Within a square single-line frame, there are 22 vertical lines, with each line containing 35 Chinese characters. The name of the medicine appears at the top in a horizontal line, which reads “生榮化瘀丹” (*Sheng rong hua yu dan*) in a larger font.

The woodblock itself does not contain information on the exact date of its production. However, based on the medicine’s prescription history as well as the style of the woodblock script, its production might be traced to the late Qing period around the late 19th century.

The recipe of *hua yu dan* 化瘀丹 appears in *Yi xue ji cheng* 醫學集成 compiled by Liu Shilian 劉仕廉 (1809-1874) during the Qing dynasty. The earliest edition of *Yi xue ji cheng* was published in 1873 by a private printing house known as *Zui yin shan fang* 醉吟山房. The ingredients of the medicine include Chinese Angelica Root (歸尾), Red Peony Root (赤芍), Rhizome of Nutgrass Galingale (香附), Corydalis Tuber (元胡), Sappan Wood (蘇木), Safflower (紅花), Rhubarb (酒軍), Herba Lycopi (澤蘭), Sweet Wine (甜酒). *Sheng rong* 生榮 is probably the name of a pharmacy, likely named *Sheng rong yao hao* 生榮藥號. No additional information about this pharmacy can be traced. The medicine was used to treat gastropathy related sickness and adjust disharmony and depletion of blood for women. The woodblock purchased has instructions for how the medicine should be taken, “Take pills twice or three times per day, and use black vinegar to swallow it down.”



Above: A Chinese woodblock sample for the recipe of *Sheng rong hua yu dan*
(Image credit: Stephen Qiao)

The recipe itself is not given in the announcement. Instead, a list of symptoms and how to alleviate them using the medicine follows. All the symptoms for which the medicine can be used afflict women exclusively. For example, one of the points in the list reads, “Cures post-natal conditions: depletion of the blood, retainment of the placenta in the womb, dizziness, lockjaw, black patterns in the vision, continuous bleeding from the womb, and piercing pain in the lower abdomen.”

There is no signature or date on the block. It is possible that the sheets printed from it would have been handed out along with the pills, or would have served as advertising posters. Evidence of the carver’s knife is visible on the woodblock. The block is slightly bowed. Other than that, it’s in a relatively good condition.

NOTABLE ACQUISITIONS (CONT.)

The East Asian Library has been supporting the University community's teaching and learning activities. To enhance our faculty's teaching in book history, print history, religious studies, and many other disciplines, the Library has acquired this woodblock to provide additional experiential learning opportunities for students. Please consult the EAL director and Chinese studies librarian for other detailed information about this artifact and how to use it for teaching and research. (S. Qiao)

JAPANESE RESOURCE:

Akindo sugiwai kagami 商人生業鑑 (5 volumes, 1818) and Corresponding Woodblock



Above: Cover of *Akindo Sugiwai Kagami*

(Image credit: Fabiano Rocha)

The Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library has acquired the Bunsei 1 (1818) edition of *Akindo sugiwai kagami* 商人生業鑑 that can be roughly translated as *Lessons for Merchants to Learn Business*, authored by Iwagaki Mitsusada 岩垣光定 and illustrated by Morioka Mitsunobu 守岡光信. The original work was published in 1757. It was published in 5 volumes. There is not much information about the author, but it is assumed he was a scholar of Shingon and a merchant himself.

In the book titled *The Mercantile Ethical Tradition in Edo Period Japan: A Comparative Analysis with Bushido*, Horide Ichiro 堀出一郎, Professor Emeritus of Reitaku University, argues that contrary to the notion that merchants that occupied the base of the social order were unethical, they rather “acted in accordance with a well-developed ethical code, a spirit that that may be called *shonindo* or ‘The Way of the Merchant.’” *Shonindo* is defined by putting together concepts from Shinto, Confucianism and Buddhism such as honesty, simplicity, benevolence, justice, fidelity, frugality or thrift, patience or endurance, to name a few. While *Bushido* is widely known as the moral code of the samurai class and often perceived

as the guiding principle in Japanese business practices, Horide found evidence that *Shonindo* is essentially the equivalent to *Bushido*, except for matters of life and death.

The notion that merchants were unethical was perpetrated by the samurai class, who occupied the top position in society. Their power and influence were directly connected with periods of war, as they were able to rise in status and accumulate income from the battles they won. As Edo was a period of peace, their ability to raise their status and accumulate wealth diminished. In contrast, merchants' activities were on the increase by serving the growing population of samurais who were summoned to live in Edo where the *Bakufu*, or administering governance, was established. The economic prosperity achieved by the merchant class thus posed a threat to the samurai class who no longer had much to do in such times of peace and stability.

Education was extremely important to the merchant class. Similarly to the samurais who sent their children to *hanko*, or feudal schools, to study Confucian texts, the merchants sent their children to *terakoya*, where they

NOTABLE ACQUISITIONS (CONT.)

learned everything they needed to become full and upstanding members of society. *Terakoya* teachings were based on Shinto, Buddhism and Confucianism, and helped students to learn how to discern from right and wrong and how to be considerate of others.

Horide notes that the passage below is illustrative of how the Buddhist and Confucian teachings are incorporated in the practices observed by the merchants. It was extracted from Takimoto Seiichi's 瀧本誠一 *Nihon Keizai Taiten* 日本經濟大典 (1928), vol. 13 on a specific passage from *Akindo sugiwai kagami*:

On the benefits of business:

Merchants are called liars, but they live by buying and selling goods. They naturally should make some small profit. They must, however, be honest. For example, should some discrepancy arise, do not exaggerate it, consider your reputation, and if there are ten, check into three, at most five, and leave the rest to run their course. If you do that, then even should some misapprehension arise it will not be a big matter. Important for a merchant is to swear upon his ancestors never to cause anybody trouble, make mistakes, or live extravagantly, then he will live respectfully (p. 642).

Akindo sugiwai kagami is beautifully illustrated and a fine example of woodblock printing craftsmanship. While typographic technology was brought twice to Japan before the nineteenth century, it was never successfully integrated into the early modern Japanese publishing industry. Woodblock printing remained the predominant publishing style well into the mid-nineteenth century.

In addition to the five volume edition of the *Akindo sugiwai kagami*, we acquired one woodblock (19 x 71 x 2 cm), with carved text on both sides for leaves 13- 5 in v. 4, and one large illustration. It can be found in our catalogue under the title: *Akindo sugiwai kagami hangi* 商人生業鑑板木. Below you can view the image of the printed version (the second of the two images) juxtaposed with the illustration on the woodblock (the first of the two images). It appears on leaf 13 of v. 4. The illustration depicts a prideful lord being served by a merchant. The five volumes are kept in the protected location and the woodblock in the Tibet location. Please ask for assistance at the Loan Services desk if you would like to consult these materials. (F. Rocha)

Right: The woodblock (the first image),
with its corresponding illustration
on printed book (the second image)

(Image credit: Fabiano Rocha)



Source Consulted:

Horide, Ichiro. *The Mercantile Ethical Tradition in Edo Period Japan : A Comparative Analysis with Bushido*. 1st ed. 2019. Springer Singapore, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-7338-1>. Accessed 13 December 2024.

LIBRARY STAFF UPDATES

Andrew Ip, Chinese Studies Librarian

The Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library is delighted to welcome Andrew Ip to our team. He began his role as Chinese Studies Librarian on October 1, 2024. Mr. Ip is responsible for the planning, development, acquisition, cataloguing, and management of our Chinese Studies collections. He also serves as the primary liaison for Chinese Studies across relevant academic departments and programs at the University of Toronto. Mr. Ip holds a Master's degree in Library and Information Studies from the University of Alberta and a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Humanities from Hong Kong Baptist University. Most recently, he served as an Academic Library Resident with the Collection Strategies Unit at the University of Alberta. (H. Kim)



Above: Andrew Ip, Chinese Studies Librarian
(Image credit: The Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library)

Farewell to Julia Chun and Stephen Qiao

In 2024, the East Asian Library bid farewell to Julia Chun, who served as the Korean Studies Librarian since 2015, and Stephen Qiao, our former Chinese Studies Librarian. Stephen supported the library for the past 1.5 years on a contract basis, assisting with the transition. We extend our heartfelt thanks to both for their invaluable contributions. The search for a new Korean Studies Librarian is currently underway. (H. Kim)

The East Asian Library Newsletter is published twice a year. Please send comments and questions to:

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The image of the front cover page: a photo of *Chinese Stone Rubbing of a Horse*, taken at the Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library in January 2025

