From Berlin National Library, East Asia Department: Germany's National Resource for East Asian Material

Abstract

For more than 50 years, the East Asia Department of the Berlin State Library has been hosting a special interest collection on East and Southeast Asia. Integrated into a federal network of German libraries, supervised and in part financed by the German Research Foundation (DFG – Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft), this collection has become the largest of its kind in Europe. The East Asia Department supplies German and European libraries with publications in East Asian languages through a special inter-library loan service. Since 2002, the Berlin State Library has offered access to electronic resources like databases and electronic journals from the East Asian region via the virtual library CrossAsia. Furthermore, the East Asia Department has become an access point to East Asian databases for European consortia.

Introduction

The history of German libraries and their historical networks is quite different from other European or American libraries. Germany is historically and politically a decentralized country with 16 federal states which exercise their sovereign rights on cultural and educational affairs. For historical reasons, the German National Library started to collect mainly material in the German language in the beginning of the 20th century. Material in other languages was and still is collected by other federal libraries and traditional university libraries. In order to offer access to all relevant material in all languages more than 20 German libraries assumed responsibility for special research collections in the whole field of research interest and sciences. These collections are supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation)1 by means of acquisition grants. The Berlin State Library is in charge of different...
special research collections such as law, Slavonic studies and literature, foreign newspapers, topographic maps, cartography and East and Southeast Asia. Over the past ten years libraries had to change their traditional structures and patterns since collection building, licensing, consortia, cataloguing, metadata, organising access to the collections, digitalization, new readers’ services, acquisition and integration of electronic resources necessitated new approaches. Increasingly they have to provide new push-instead of pull-services. Technical details and knowledge about them are more important in a library ever since. For collections related to the East Asian languages and scripts the situation is even more complicated as they have to deal with different scripts and different data encodings. This paper tries to offer both – a short overview on the collection and the activities in the whole field of the integration of East Asian electronic resources into an emerging traditional collection and the development of new readers’ services on a national level. Amongst the leading German research libraries, the Berlin State Library – part of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation – is the only one maintaining an independent East Asia Department. Thereby it follows the example of various modern scientific institutions – especially in the United States –, which have recognised the distinct cultural and ethnic autonomy of the East Asian countries and have found similar pragmatic solutions.

Collecting East Asiatica has a long tradition of the Berlin State Library. Since the founding of the "Churfürstliche Bibliothek zu Berlin" in the year 1661, Chinese material and later on the East Asiatica (Manjurica, Japonica etc.) have been an important part of the collection. The first printed catalogue of the Berlin Library was the catalogue of its Chinese collection ("Katalog der Sinesischen Sammlung"), which still gives proof of the collection development policy and the facilities of acquisition in the 17th century. After having been removed from storage during the World War II, the larger part of the collectibles have never been returned to the "Deutsche Staatsbibliothek" (East) nor the "Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz" (West) and are still scattered over Cracow, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other parts of the world.

Since 1951 the special collection East and Southeast Asia ("Sondersammelgebiet SSG 6,25") was established at the Berlin State Library, supported and partly funded by the German Research Foundation. Within this framework, the collection of the East Asia Department is nowadays the largest collection of East Asiatica in Europe. Wolfgang Seuberlich, former Director of the East Asia Department, states in his above-mentioned article, that the Berlin collection is purely like a library for use and has no ambitions to be a museum. The East Asia Department of the Berlin State Library is responsible for the acquisition and indexing of both Western publications on East Asia and all printed matter in the languages of the East Asian countries, such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Mongolian, Tibetan, Uyghur, as well as the "minority" languages of China. Furthermore, literature concerning the East and Southeast Asian region is being acquired. In co-operation with the Oriental Department, the East Asia Department supplies German and European libraries with publications in East Asian languages by means of a special nationwide inter-library loan service ("Blauer Leihverkehr", i.e. inter-library loan service for literature in the East Asian languages). This service is being offered to the departments of the respective universities.

On a national basis, the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Bavarian State Library in Munich) also offers a comprehensive stock of Sinica in addition to the Berlin collection. Internationally, the collections of Sinica of the Bodleian Library in Oxford, the University Library Cambridge, the British Library, and the School of Oriental and African Studies (both situated in London) must be highlighted. In the Netherlands, the Institute for Sinological Studies at the Leiden University has a considerate collection. In France, the Bibliothèque Nationale as well as several faculty and research libraries (primarily in Paris and Lyon) collect East Asian material. This
also applies to smaller libraries in Scandinavia, Switzerland, Austria, and Italy. 

**ACQUISITIONS**

Usually, East Asian material for research and teaching is acquired in the faculty and seminar libraries in Germany. Changes in academic staff sometimes result in a slightly different collection development policy and therefore different emphases within the collection. Unfortunately, most of the institutes are shortly staffed. Sometimes, the material itself is problematic to handle. East Asian literature can only be found and clearly identified in catalogues if it is registered and listed in the original script (most of all Chinese, Japanese, Korean – CJK). From the European point of view, the transcription of the respective script is only done for cataloguing or indexing reasons. With the establishment of Unicode as a standard, these difficulties can hopefully be overcome in the near future. Since the year 2002, the East Asia Department offers a Unicode-based online catalogue which lists the recent acquisitions.

Since the fields of study within the East Asian sciences have always been widespread – and more so due to the stronger emphasis being put on research concerning present times – the collection building policy covers all areas of interest. All countries of this region are included: PR China (with Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, Tibet, Hong Kong and Macao), Taiwan, Mongolia, Japan, and North and South Korea.

The scope of the collection is however limited to the humanities and social sciences (with some other material collected where appropriate and if relevant to the main scope of the collection). The collection is considered to be especially strong in recent publications covering East Asia and the individual regions, and in subjects such as politics, law, economics, recent history, modern literature, and modern art. The collection also holds rare ancient material from China and Japan such as manuscripts and woodblock prints.

Subjects like engineering, medicine, economics, natural sciences, and agricultural sciences are represented throughout bibliographies and publications about regional history. The central libraries in the respective countries are responsible for collecting the whole range of material. Exceptions are specific regional trends within culture and science such as acupuncture, history of medicine, and natural sciences. Additionally, in the field of economics and agricultural sciences, monographs are collected in the East Asian languages, as far as social sciences are involved. Due to the necessary and cost intensive linguistic competence, only the "German National Library for Science and Technology" in Hannover as a central subject library is able to acquire and process East Asian literature.

The following area subjects mentioned in the special collection’s programme ("Sondersammelgebietpro gramm") are acquired for the collection: language and literature, history including social history and economic history, politics, constitution, administration, publications concerning political parties, labour unions, and similar organisations, anthropology, folklore and regional geography, previous and early history, ethnology, educational systems and higher education, academic institutions, information, book and library science, journalism, cinema, broadcasting, television, religion and philosophy, arts, music, theatre, dance, law, and mathematics, cultivation, medicine, natural sciences and technology (all of these in their traditional characteristics typical to the region) as well as official government publications. Literary texts are collected – if possible – in complete editions and compilations thus serving as sources of research. Main focus is put on scientifically relevant literature and special research literature. Furthermore, publications of a more documentary nature originating from all areas of life serve as sources of information and research. Taking into consideration the considerably high production of literature in East Asia and the limited budget for acquisitions, it is not possible to buy everything available.

Professional journals and a representative selection of popular magazines (women, sports)
are also acquired. A smaller amount of important daily newspapers from the respective countries are received on subscription – if possible as bound editions. This task is being administered by the newspaper department.

American doctoral theses concerning East Asia are acquired individually based on a user’s demand or on the specialised subject librarian’s decision. The East Asia Department of the Berlin State Library buys source material in microform in coordination with other national libraries. In addition, selected fundamental publications from East Asia concerning Germany are collected.

CHINA, JAPAN, AND KOREA

The acquisition of publications originating from China, Japan and Korea is basically limited to recent publications. The scope of the collection concentrates on the humanities and social sciences (with some emphasis on law). Moreover, the East Asia Department attempts to consider the whole range of Chinese culture, also including rather rare fields of study like light literature, cinema, children’s books, propaganda publications from political parties and unions. For all three regions – with the exception of North Korea – the Berlin State Library relies on the cooperation with reliable book-sellers and library suppliers.

Although the collection consists primarily of material in the East Asian languages, it also includes Western language books and periodicals covering the Far East and the individual countries. The goal of the collections policy is to acquire all recent publications, the criteria for selection therefore being rather ample. In addition, the library buys Western language material published in the Asian countries. Japanese literature about China is considered when acquiring Japanese literature. Japanese articles concerning politics, economics, and law in China, and also publications in the field of humanities (sinology) are relevant. The same applies to Korean literature about Japan and China as well as Japanese and Chinese literature about Korea and Japan.

Generally, reference literature is selected completely, in particular bibliographies, biographical reference books, encyclopaedia, yearbooks concerning the area subjects of the special collection, commemorative volumes for academic institutions, universities, publishing houses, and festschriften for researchers. Encyclopaedias are also acquired selectively in the fields of technology and natural science.

CENTRAL ASIA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Acquisition materials in Mongolian, Tibetan, and Uyghur cannot be acquired by means of well-regulated book-sellers’ connections, one rather has to use and network personal connections to local trades-people. Business journeys to these regions are therefore of utmost importance, these being financially supported by the DFG. Local literature is also being collected on these trips. Personal contacts and relationships to libraries and book-sellers are equally important for the Southeast Asian book market thus making business journeys indispensable.

NATIONWIDE LITERATURE SUPPLY IN GERMANY

For more than 30 years the East Asia Department has been dealing with the problem of the nationwide document supply for the East Asian collection. In times long before "subito" – the German standard inter-library loan service – requests for publications originating from the special collection were handled within the German inter-library lending region. With the help of a special nationwide inter-library loan service ("Blauer Leihverkehr"), the demand for literature from institutions connected with East Asia could be dealt with directly by the East Asia Department. Thus, books, journals, and articles can be ordered. The institutions sign a special inter-library loan contract with the East Asia Department, allowing the direct loan of the material. Nearly all of the German East Asian institutes use this efficient and quick delivery service. Even books not being owned by the Berlin State Library can be ordered.
via this service. These titles are bibliographically identified, ordered and delivered, if possible. The "Blauer Leihverkehr" is even nowadays still being offered by means of conventional loan request forms. Since 2002 this service has also been made available online, as well as through the OPAC.

ONLINE CATALOGUE

For more than 15 years now the East Asia Department of the Berlin State Library has listed its stock electronically, in original script if desired. The users have access to a Unicode (UTF-8) OPAC in CJK\(^\text{12}\). Currently approximately 250,000 data records which comprise more than 30% of the whole collection in East Asian languages can be searched and ordered online. In the near future the retro-conversion of the card catalogues is planned, thus enabling the user to search within the greater part of the collection online. Titles in Western languages – and all journals in all languages and yearbooks (年鉴) – can be found in the main catalogue, the StabKat.

ELECTRONIC RANGE OF PRODUCTS

The field of electronic publications from East Asia is growing rapidly worldwide. However, between the three regions – China, Japan and Korea – enormous differences can be found concerning the degree of digitalisation and the build-up of (full text) databases. In China over the last 10 years the largest text databases in East Asia perhaps even worldwide have been developed. Traditionally the special collection area East and Southeast Asia is supposed to provide printed material nationwide. With the development of the electronic resources since 2002 this also applies for this huge area of East Asian electronic resources which is partially difficult to view as a whole. Long before the existence of the German national project on national licensing – "Nationallizenzen"\(^\text{13}\) –, being supported by the DFG, the Berlin State Library subscribed to the database "China Academic Journals" (CAJ)\(^\text{14}\) in the field of humanities and social sciences. The users of the special nationwide inter-library loan service ("Blauer Leihverkehr") were offered cost-free access for one year.

CAJ allows access to approximately 22 million scientific articles from about 7,200 Chinese journals and is always updated. It covers the subject areas technology and natural sciences as well as medicine, agricultural science, humanities and social sciences. CAJ started at Berlin State Library as a trial in 2002 and was successful within the first 6 months. At first, the East Asia Department could not be sure if the desire to have access to electronic resources from the region would guarantee a constant use of the product and therefore justify the capital investments. Experience though has shown that the scientific world extensively uses CAJ. From its beginning in 2002 to the present time CAJ has been the most-used electronic resource within a wide range of products from the East Asia Department. During the test stage for free access to CAJ, a German and European consortium was formed with the Chinese partner. The consortium was a new approach for both the East Asia Department and the Chinese company. The Chinese partners had to be persuaded that alternative ways of licensing needed to be identified and agreed upon. Among the licensees it was necessary to find possibilities to organise access to the resources. After the first year four German and three more European institutions took part in the consortium. They could therefore profit from considerate price reductions. For small institutions in Germany there were and are still no possibilities to provide individual financing. After all, document delivery was guaranteed to the Berlin State Library via contract. The project "Nationallizenzen" (national licenses) offered access to the database within Germany. Since 2006 all series are available for all German research institutions and registered single users – including the series from the fields technology, natural sciences, medicine, und agricultural sciences. The East Asia Department is the responsible body for the European consortium, also comprising of libraries from Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, and
Sweden.

Resulting from the experiences with CAJ, the East Asia Department has developed its own acquisition policy statements for electronic resources:

1. Only databases which allow nationwide access within Germany are acquired respectively licensed.

2. The contract for the special nationwide inter-library loan service ("Blauer Leihverkehr") is the base for access within Germany. The registered institutions for the "Blauer Leihverkehr" must be able to get access to the electronic resources of the East Asia Department of the Berlin State Library.

3. Usually, electronic resources should be hosted in Berlin.

4. The technical infrastructure – being quite different for the various East Asian databases – should be integrated into the Berlin State Library IT structures.

5. The use of the electronic resources should be offered through the same IT structures of the Berlin State Library as those of the other departments.

During the first negotiations with further suppliers the conditions for the nationwide access were being explored. In general, the East Asia Department was successful in achieving the essential conditions from the bidders. Generally, the negotiations lasted for more than one year. When the acquisition policy statement specifications for East Asian electronic resources were not accepted by the partners, the East Asia Department did without the respective database. In the meantime the East Asia Department has acquired a unique position in Europe and above – at least for Chinese databases. After two years, database suppliers are already offering their products in compliance with the conditions that are acceptable for European institutions. As European libraries collecting East Asian material are often financially limited, one tries to develop and offer alternative licensing models for the most costly databases within the frame of consortia.

**VIRTUAL LIBRARY EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA – CROSSASIA**

With the support of the German Research Foundation the virtual library East and Southeast Asia – CrossAsia – was created as a cooperative, in order to concentrate the electronic products and make them available. Users may register here; all electronic resources of the East Asia Department are offered via this platform. In general, completed East Asian databases are provided on different Berlin State library hosted servers. Due to technical reasons, East Asian databases require their own servers being configured for the data processing according to national encodings. For the PR China, support of encoding GB-2312 is a prerequisite; for Japan EUC and Shift-JIS, for Korean databases EUC-KR. Most of the full text databases can only be used with a proprietary reader showing the full texts and offering a further range of functions. These client-oriented programmes generally only run on defined work stations. The East Asia Department offers access to these Internet, Intranet and CD-ROM databases through terminal servers, in order not to stress users with the installation of specialised software which has to be adapted to national encodings. In general, in the university context the installation of this kind of software is not possible. The different sorts of terminal servers offer a direct approach to the software required (readers, but also browsers), so that users and libraries only have to use the connection to the terminal servers. Users being registered for CrossAsia may use the East Asian databases through the same infrastructure as the Berlin State Library readers with their valid library card. Users of CrossAsia only get access to the electronic resources being licensed by the East Asia Department. Of course, all users of the Berlin State Library with a library card may use the East Asian databases, and they can furthermore get access to the Western language resources concerning East Asia. The East Asia Department is responsible for most of the databases mentioned within European consortia. If required, it can also offer the technical infrastructure for the licensing of scientific institutions.

For all users of the special nationwide inter-library loan service ("Blauer Leihverkehr"),
registration for CrossAsia is free of charge. Within the framework of the virtual library, a guide on special information – the Online Guide East Asia\(^7\) – is being offered (in co-operation with WWW China Virtual Library\(^15\) (Leiden) and Asian Studies WWW Virtual Library\(^9\) (Canberra)), as well as a meta search in catalogues, databases, and German union catalogues concerning East Asia. This meta search also supports different scripts. That means that the catalogue of the East Asia Department may be searched simultaneously in original script in connection with the union catalogues of the Japanese university libraries or the online catalogue of the University Leiden Sinological Institute or the University Hong Kong catalogue.

**DATABASES**

The East Asia Department offers products of the company Wanfangdata, Beijing, in addition to the CAJ database (being supported as a national licence). China Online Journals is composed of scientific articles not being listed in CAJ, Dissertations of China from the humanities and social sciences, as well as a database concerning Chinese law, the Policies and Laws of China. All of them are accessible via the virtual library East and Southeast Asia – CrossAsia\(^19\). Full texts may be accessed from all databases. Amongst the full text databases several products must be mentioned: the digital edition of the Chinese People’s Daily 人民日報 (Renmin ribao) from the publication start in 1949 until today. Online bibliographies are an essential tool for journals originating from the 19th and early 20th century which usually are poorly registered, the same applies to the period of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. In this context, the databases 複印報刊資料 (Fuyin baokan ziliao) and 全國報刊索引 (Quanguo baokan suoyin), a Shanghai Library product, must be mentioned. The former database partly gives access to full texts, whereas the latter lists articles starting from 1857, however not as full texts.

The full text database 中國基本古籍庫 (Zhongguo jiben gujiku), containing 10,000 pre-modern literary works, was also activated as a national license, and is hosted in Berlin. The digital editions of the encyclopedia 永樂大典 (Yongle dadian), finished during the Ming time in 1408, and the historical outline of the Ming and Qing dynasty 明清實錄 (MingQing shilu) are available in digitised form through CrossAsia.

Furthermore, other important pre-modern works are accessible as digitised full texts: for example, the first imperial encyclopedia 古今圖書集成 (Gujin tushu jicheng) from 1726 which is systematically structured and printed. In between 1771 and 1781, the biggest editorial project was realised: the text collection 四庫全書 (Siku quanshu), comprising 3461 volumes for the emperor’s library. Within the online database full texts can be searched in the entire text corpus. Additionally, a dictionary is enclosed, and texts may be printed out.

The e-version of the Sibu Congkan 四部叢刊, a compilation of 504 rare classical Chinese texts, is also available as a digital product. It comprises more than 3,100 volumes originating from the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. The printed edition was published between 1919 and 1936 and printed by Commercial Press. The database allows access not only to the full texts, but also to the images of the original version. Last but not least, the full text database 石刻彙編 (Shike huibian) is available, a compendium in relation to Chinese stone inscriptions showing epigraphic material from all dynasties, as well as 十通 (Shitong), a type of encyclopedia of ancient China. Both databases are full text searchable, and include the images of the original versions. All three databases mentioned will be accessible from summer 2007 onwards via the virtual library East and Southeast Asia – CrossAsia. Access to the electronic version of the People’s Daily 人民日報 is offered, too. Since spring 2007 users may also use the Database of the National People’s Congress (全國人民代表大會資料庫), the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference Document Database (中華人民政治協商會議資料庫), the Database of the Chinese Government (中國政府資料庫), and the Database of the Communist Party of China (中國共產黨數據庫).

CrossAsia also offers access to Chinese ebooks. These contain a selection of so called yearbooks (年鑑) as well as reference literature in the field of Chinese law. The ebooks are offered to registered users on a separate server.
They are downloaded from a server in Beijing and administered through a Digital Rights Management system. Users may save, annotate and read the publications on reserved storage space on the Berlin terminal server. After the end of the „loan period“, the publication is returned to the pool of the other ebooks. Electronic books are especially relevant for the field of East Asian studies in Germany because gaps in the collection for periods in the early 20th century could thus be closed retrospectively. This also applies to printed material which was published during the Cultural Revolution and did not find its way to German libraries. In order to fill these gaps in the collection, the East Asia Department of the Berlin State Library has already initiated negotiations. The respective supplier has also been contacted regarding the delivery of a further copy for the library stack.

The East Asia Department has a license to research in Japanese journals and scientific articles through the Citation Information by NII (CiNii - 論文情報ナビゲーター) via the National Institute of Informatics (NII). For parts, access to the full text is possible. Japanese newspapers from Nikkei may be used for the period from 1975 onwards through 日経テレコン21 (Nikkei Telcom 21) as a full text archive. The Japanese bibliographic database MagazinePlus (Nichigai Associates) provides indexing for 8.5 million articles from the humanities and social sciences, medicine, technology, and natural sciences. BookPlus is a bibliography of Japanese monographs starting with the year 1927 (Shōwa period). From the publication year 1986 onwards the tables of content are accessible through CrossAsia.

The East Asia Department is constantly intensifying its contacts with further suppliers from Japan and Korea. There, databases are less costly, but public relations are more essential. One reason for this is that in Japan and South Korea relevant resources are edited and provided by the respective national library or library networks. KERIS (Korean Education and Research Information Service), the Korean Association of Research Libraries, has made available online articles, monographs, and theses. The East Asia Department has a test account through CrossAsia since December 2006.

With the start of efforts to supply digital resources nationwide, two aspects have become particularly important. Firstly, German institute libraries using the special collection East and Southeast Asia depend on the accessibility of the material offered by the East Asia Department. Especially archives for journals sometimes wish to discontinue their paper editions as soon as the content is accessible free of charge and electronically. The East Asia Department of the Berlin State Library will carry on collecting the printed versions as well as the digital editions and will make them both accessible nationwide. The topic of sustainability was already discussed when the first electronic project, the China Academic Journals database (now supported by the German Research Foundation as a national licence) was launched. For all digital products of the East Asia Department, long time preservation is becoming more and more relevant in the nearest future. All proprietary solutions will be considerably difficult to handle in the future and resulting problems can only be solved in co-operation with the community.

CONCLUSIONS

Nowadays, the East Asia collection is the biggest of its kind in Europe. In terms of access to East Asian electronic resources, the East Asia Department of the Berlin State Library is among the top players worldwide. It is responsible not only for supplying the German institutions, but also for European consortia. It also offers solutions within the field of technical handling. The East Asia Department participates in parts in the project “German national licenses” (supported by the German Research Foundation) and will keep on developing cost intensive projects through third party funds. In the future, the goal is not only to preserve the status quo and to ensure sustainability, but prospectively to develop and enhance the collection and the products in co-operation with other institutions. Since 2002, the East Asia Department of the Berlin State Library has accomplished and established new strategies for licensing East Asian databases. Licensers had to accept that the situation in
Germany and Europe is fundamentally different from conditions in America. The general set-up in Germany is specific: the special collection’s programme and the East Asia collection as a national resource have created a national responsibility for the nationwide literature supply. In Europe, but also in the US, this model of basically national licensing of highly specialised databases and full texts is being observed with interest. In this respect, the traditional structures of the special collection’s programme (SSG) has had positive effects on the provisioning of electronic resources for at least the special collection East and Southeast Asia maintained by the East Asia Department of the Berlin State Library.

NOTES


[16] Readers must apply for a library/readers card to use the library services like using the collections and electronic resources.

