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Regional Oral History Office

China Scholars Series

Elizabeth Huff

TEACHER AND FOUNDING CURATOR OF THE EAST ASIATIC LIBRARY

FROM URBANA TO BERKELEY BY WAY OF PEKING

With an Introduction by
John C. Jamieson

An Interview Conducted by
Rosemary Levenson

Copy No. 1



Elizabeth Huff in her study.
October 1976

Photograph by Rosemary Levenson



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Rosemary Levenson
Interviewer-Editor

Willa Baum
Department Head
Regional Oral History Office

8 March 1977
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INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1947, Columbia made a grave mistake. A new Ph.D. in Chinese literature from Harvard had learned of openings in the Oriental library there and at Berkeley and, visiting Columbia first, was told that the annual wage of \$5,000 (and all she could read?) was what could be expected from them. Even such lavish generosity could not leash the applicant's interest in Berkeley, and for that we are forever in her--and Columbia's--debt. Elizabeth Huff came to the University of California that year to stay for twenty more, founding the East Asiatic Library and building and moulding it into what, when she left, was the finest of its kind in the country.

I came to Berkeley as an undergraduate in 1956, and already by that time, Elizabeth Huff had constructed an important research library. There were few signs of the humbler, 75,000 group that she began with, for by then it was three times that size. The collection, once scattered throughout the nine floors of stacks in Berkeley's General Library, was now housed in a handsome and spacious building at the center of the University grounds, as a separate and autonomous branch. It was an integral part of the faculty of Oriental studies, with a staff which included scholars of international repute: Miss Li Chi, who later left to serve as Professor of Chinese at Michigan and the University of British Columbia; Dr. and Mrs. Chaoying Fang, now retired from Columbia after distinguished teaching and research careers on three continents; Dr. and Mrs. Hans Frankel, now both members of the faculty at Yale; Mr. Charles Hamilton, foremost cataloguing authority and scholar of Japanese literature; and Dr. Richard Irwin, author of important works on the development of the Chinese novel. And at the head was the Head--an official title she seemed to bear with puckish delight--the force which insured the high quality of the collection and attracted such an array of talent to organize it.

The fascinating conversations between Elizabeth Huff and Rosemary Levenson presented here bring that force into sharp focus. They reveal a strong, natural leader whose preeminent instincts were scholarly, not the librarian's librarian to whom organization and processes are primary concerns. She tells us, in fact, that she came into her role at Berkeley with no more technical preparation than "a two week crash course in Asian librarianship with Chiu Kai-ming." Yet in numerous ways, she was a pacesetter in her profession. The meticulous cataloguing standards she defined are international models and resulted in the selection of the East Asiatic Library's catalogue for publication in its entirety by G.K. Hall & Co. The subject catalogue she established was a pioneer effort among Asian collections, as was her monthly publication Hsin-pien shu-mu, or "Newly Catalogued Books." Then, long before the pressures of shrinking space and funding made it mandatory, she had the foresight to plan a rational inter-university

cooperative collection policy. Agreements were concluded with Stanford to divide concentration both temporally and, in certain subjects, geographically, with the result that there is considerably less duplication between the two university collections than is the case with institutions in proximity with each other elsewhere in the country. And their combined collections rank only behind the Library of Congress in the United States, both in size and quality.

We see, too, in the conversations, a collector of rare skill and perception. Details of the drama and excitement that were part of her massive purchase from the Mitsui Library in Japan are revealed to us, a true episode in international intrigue. At one swoop, 100,000 volumes were added to the East Asiatic Library. The seven sub-collections they were divided amongst ranged from rubbings of Chinese stele inscriptions to rare Korean editions, and their acquisition made Berkeley an instant leader in each of these subjects. To sustain the patience of all who were involved and marshal the sizeable funds required could only have been carried out by one such as she who commanded respect at all levels of the University hierarchy. The policies she describes for collecting in less dramatic areas, as well, have assured the basic strength of the library. She first established a solid core collection, then carefully added those specialized categories which, in her judgment, an institution of Berkeley's importance would one day require. A relatively recent addition to the East Asian curriculum, Shang China and its oracular records, provides one of many examples of the accuracy of her vision. Thanks to Elizabeth Huff, the East Asiatic Library's coverage is rich there and represents a research and teaching nucleus that could only be brought together at tremendous cost today, if it were still possible.

While her contributions through the East Asiatic Library are clearly immense, her concurrent role as a member of the faculty of Oriental Languages at Berkeley was equally important to many of us. The year-long course entitled "Chinese Bibliography" which she taught was included in the undergraduate listings, although I doubt she ever saw anything but higher degree candidates in it. Its reputation for demanding a high level of fluency in Literary Chinese and stringent standards of written presentation certainly intimidated my contemporaries, none of whom dared enroll until they had had years of preparation. Yet once into it, it was an absorbing and enriching experience. The handsomely groomed and tailored professor was in class first, always, seated at the head of a long seminar table drawing thoughtfully on a cigarette. Once the last of her hopeless charges had stumbled in and got seated at a judicious distance, she would begin her careful discussions, leading us first through basic book classification schemes on finally, at the end of the course, into complex writings of eighteenth century Chinese literary critics. It was indispensable training, inspiring in us as it did a discerning attitude toward editions and instructing us in the use of the wide range of Chinese, Japanese and Western references necessary for an independent Sinological research ability. And not a lesser accrual, however painful at the time, was the stern guidance in English prose style we were treated to as a side benefit. Many are thankful to her for it.

Elizabeth Huff retired early from her library and teaching tasks to devote full time to research. In so doing, she insured a plunge in instructional standards and a fate for later students to take her course under one known to have difficulty telling his recto from his verso. But we'll still forgive her premature departure when we see her monumental study of the Wen-hsin tiao-lung in print. For us all, it will increase an indebtedness that is already pleasantly heavy.

John C. Jamieson
Professor of Oriental Languages
and director of Joint Stanford-
Berkeley East Asia Language and
Area Center

1 March 1977
University of California at Berkeley

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Elizabeth Huff has enjoyed a brilliant career as founding head of the East Asiatic Library, University of California, Berkeley, and as a scholar and teacher in the field of Chinese literature. When she was appointed head of the East Asiatic Library in 1947, it was a library department in name only; books in Oriental languages were mostly intermingled with the General Library's collection, and space allocated to the E.A.L. was minimal. Under Dr. Huff's direction, two major purchases were made, the Murakami collection in 1948, followed by the Mitsui collection in 1950, a tale fraught with drama. When news of the sale reached the Japanese press, a banner headline announced, "Great Mitsui Collection Washed Away to the United States." These and other less dramatic acquisitions brought the Berkeley library to the vanguard of university Oriental collections in this country. Without the keystones of the excellent libraries here and at Stanford, the remarkable growth of Asian Studies which has occurred on the West Coast since World War II would not have been possible.

In 1952, the East Asiatic Library and the Oriental Languages department were given their own beautiful building, Durant Hall, which the Law School had outgrown, and space problems were temporarily solved. (However, by normal library definitions, the building was already full in 1952, and the E.A.L. has since overflowed into the Biology Library on campus, and the Richmond Depository, some miles away.) In Durant Hall, with the help and support of University Librarian Donald Coney, the generous and far-reaching vision of President Robert Gordon Sproul, active faculty participation both as advisors and book purchasers, and a skilled and dedicated staff, Elizabeth Huff continued the work of building and cataloguing the collection. Always open to suggestions for improvement, she even tried having t'ao (cases) for unbound volumes made in a local prison by convicted forgers. Alas, their skills did not extend to the copying of characters, and the t'ao were ordered, as before, from Japan.

Dr. Huff's hegira from Urbana to Berkeley by way of Peking is a compelling story of determination aided by kind friends, and of unexpected opportunities eagerly seized. She took her B.A. with honors in English at the University of Illinois during the Depression, and then worked to earn money for a semester at Radcliffe College. There she studied Chinese art with Langdon Warner, and her scholarly interests shifted from Greek and Scythian art to Chinese art history. From Radcliffe, events conspired to bring her to the San Francisco Bay Area. President Aurelia Reinhardt of Mills College, Oakland, California, had invited Alfred Salmony, a recent refugee from Germany to introduce courses in Far Eastern art at Mills. She also authorized him to choose two women graduate students to study with him whom Mills would support with full scholarships (\$1000) for a year.

Elizabeth Huff was chosen to be one of the two and took her M.A. at Mills, in 1935, in Chinese art. Support was further extended for a summer session in Chinese studies at Columbia University. Temporarily stalled for lack of funds, she went to work at the University of Chicago library, and started studying the Chinese language with Herrlee Glessner Creel. An unexpected fellowship from the University of Illinois enabled her to return to Radcliffe where she became the first woman to receive a Harvard-Yenching fellowship which supported her through to the Ph.D.

She arrived in Peking as an advanced graduate student in 1940, after a year in Japan, and changed her thesis topic from art to literature; it had become impossible to study Chinese art under the unsettled conditions prevailing in China during the Japanese occupation. Determined to finish her graduate work, she, along with many other distinguished scholars, was still in China when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. The two and a half years in Japanese internment camp that followed proved not to be a total interruption of her scholarly work since she brought to camp her full allowance of fifty books, all in Chinese, and continued to work on textual studies and spoken Chinese with some of her fellow internees. A further nine months in Peking after the end of the war enabled her to finish her thesis on Huang Chieh's Shih hsüeh (Poetics). She was awarded the Ph.D. by Harvard early in 1947.

At that time, there were few academic openings in the Chinese field, particularly for women. Miss Huff was offered a job at Low Library, Columbia University, but decided to accept the challenging position at Berkeley, putting aside literary scholarship for more than twenty years. However, she was soon recognized as a scholarly resource at the University of California and encouraged by Mr. Coney to teach a Chinese bibliography course for the Oriental Languages department, which she did for many years. Later, she also taught two courses in Chinese literature, and served as an editor of the university's Chinese Dynastic Histories translation series. She returned to university service twice after her initial retirement in 1968 when sudden deaths in the library and the Oriental Languages department made her once more indispensable. Since 1972 she has been working on an early text of Chinese literary criticism, Wen-hsin tiao-lung, which will be ready for publication shortly.

For several years Elizabeth Huff's name had been prominent on the Regional Oral History Office's list of prospective memoirists in the China Scholars series. A strong supporter of the E.A.L., Dr. Felicia G. Bock kindly offered to direct the fund-raising effort through the Friends of the East Asiatic Library and was generously abetted by emeritus Professor Woodbridge Bingham and his wife, Ursula. Friends and colleagues, students and staff past and present responded warmly to the appeal and the necessary funds were soon raised.

Research and Planning

When Elizabeth Huff was invited to be a memoirist and asked if she were willing to spend the necessary time, she agreed with some reluctance; reticence and modesty seemed to represent part of the problem, and the scholar mourns time taken from scholarship.

The interviewer and her late husband Joseph R. Levenson, professor of Chinese history at the University of California, Berkeley, had known Elizabeth for more than twenty years. This old friendship made an agreeable foundation for our new relationship as interviewee and interviewer; we met (at a Chinese restaurant) where the main outlines of the memoir were settled. We agreed to proceed chronologically, while allowing for the development of subject areas in a logical way when we came to discuss the development of the East Asiatic Library. Friends and colleagues of Elizabeth Huff helped by suggesting questions and providing a crash course in library terminology. Dr. Raymond Tang, Miss Huff's successor, courteously allowed the interviewer to read the annual reports of the East Asiatic Library; where appropriate, quotations from those reports have been used to compare and contrast Elizabeth's view of the library then and now. Detailed agendas were prepared and sent to Elizabeth well before each interview.

Eleven taping sessions were held of varying lengths in Elizabeth's "Chinese study" in the charming and tranquil house in the Berkeley hills which she shares with Maryon Monahan, a small dog Chin-po and a large cat Percy. Interruptions were few, and always came either from the animals or the telephone. After the first interview, I asked Elizabeth how she felt now that we had got started. She replied, "I was dreading today a hundred times more than my cataract surgery, but do you know, (rather doubtfully) I really enjoyed it." The feeling was mutual.

Elizabeth adhered to the interview schedule almost as planned in spite of a trip East, a serious bout of 'flu, and cataract surgery. Interviewing, which started on February 3, 1976, was completed on May 14, just over four months later. Due to a technical error, the final interview resulted in two blank tapes. The interviewer had to go back, most apologetically, and ask the same questions again, a circumstance which Elizabeth treated with her customary humor and courtesy by remarking that it would give her a chance to give better answers.

Editing and Completion

The transcript of the tapes was edited by the interviewer and carved into chapters with a little verse, a few additional questions were added, and the manuscript returned to Elizabeth for comments and criticisms by mid-August. In spite of difficulties with her vision, she completed her reviews and corrections in less than a month. We spent a delightful morning poring over meticulously kept albums in order to choose illustrations for the volume. Final typing, proofing, indexing and illustrating were completed in February, 1977. Professor John C. Jamieson, now director of the Joint Stanford-Berkeley East Asia Language and Area Center, and way back then a student of Elizabeth's in the Oriental Languages department at Berkeley and both student and faculty user of the East Asiatic Library, graciously agreed to write the introduction to this volume.

A half hour video tape of Elizabeth Huff at home was made by Rosemary Levenson in November 1976, and is available for viewing through The Bancroft Library.

Rosemary Levenson
Interviewer-Editor

23 February 1977
Regional Oral History Office
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University of California at Berkeley

I FAMILY AND EDUCATION, MOSTLY IN URBANA

Family Background

RL: May we start our memoir with where you were born? You told me that we should get it right this time. [Laughter]

Huff: Yes. My parents told me that there is no official record of my birth, but I was born in May of 1912 in a clapboard house on Springfield Avenue in Urbana, Illinois.

My parents both came of Illinois farming families, my mother of the Eggleston family in Stark County, and my father from Sangamon County.

RL: Did you see much of your parents' families?

Huff: None whatever. I don't know why. My mother never took my sister or me to visit her family. They lived in small towns and sometimes on farms, and I think she'd say to my father that there was no point in our meeting our cousins on the paternal side, which I think was mistaken, so I really didn't know them. I did meet my maternal cousin Robert Browning Eggleston when we were young. He was born in Berkeley, son of a student or professor of engineering who was my mother's brother Frank. Brownie, as he was called, was kind and helpful to Virginia and me in 1962, after our mother's death. I met my father's father before his death; one of his brothers, Alonzo, was a Pony Express rider. I met my mother's mother once before her death.

RL: Did your parents practice religion?

Huff: Yes, I think, in a typical Protestant way. My father was a deacon in the First Congregational Church for many years in Champaign, and out of deference to my parents as the years went on, I continued to attend the Congregational Church as long as I lived in Urbana. I haven't attended any since since then; I'm not of a religious nature.

RL: What were the politics in your family?

Huff: [Laughter] Split right down the middle. And that was one thing upon which my father stood firm; he was a "good Democrat!" [Laughter] And my mother was a fervent and, I think, on the whole, rather unanalytical Republican. All their lives, as far as I know, they continued that and cancelled each other's votes.

My father was well read in current politics. He had an admirable view of the responsibility that everyone should take in preparing for voting; Mother had none of it. I think she'd go to a bridge club and decide on the basis of the conversation for whom to vote. [Laughter]

Years later when I went to Cambridge and to China, all through, my father always sent me absentee ballots until the war started. He knew I was on his side. [Laughter]

RL: In 1919, women got the vote. Of course, you were very young. Did this have any impact on your mother? Was she interested in the suffragette movement, and did she interest you in it?

Huff: I never heard her mention it. In later years--well, in the '20s I can remember when she decided to apply for the position of substitute teacher in the grade schools, she did talk quite enthusiastically about the rights of women to do many of the jobs that men did, and I know Mother thought that they could in most cases do them better. [Laughter] But I don't think she was active at all in the movement.

When I was less than a month old, my father took his Master's degree at the University [of Illinois] in English literature, and the well-known essayist Stuart Pratt Sherman asked him to continue for a higher degree and offered him a fellowship.

My father was a very gentle person; my mother was very dominating, and she thought that to live on a university fellowship, if one had a child and might have another, was impossible. So,

Huff: when I was about two, I believe, perhaps less, the family moved to a small town where my father took the position of superintendent of schools, and there my sister was born. It's a coal mining town called Divernon.

The following year, my father took a similar position in another small town, Abingdon, near Galesburg, which had then a charming and, I think, completely insignificant college called Heading. I think I first developed a love of campuses there because the children of the town all played on the shady campus among and with the squirrels. It was delightful.

Grade School and Sunday School

Huff: I entered first grade there and had a rather ferocious teacher. I had been reading for more than a year when I entered, and one day the teacher gave the students copies of--not a primer, really--I think it was a storybook. She asked each child to read a page and then to raise his hand when he had finished. I had rather a head start and I raised my hand when I had read a page, at which Miss Robb looked at me and said, "You lie." [Sighs]

That evening I told my father of the incident. I didn't want to criticize her because she was on his staff. But he was furious and was able to arrange, of course, for me to transfer at the end of the term, in the middle of the year, to second grade, which I finished then. And that summer, 1919, the family moved back to Urbana.

I can't say exactly how the family survived through all those years. My father had different kinds of work, sometimes at the university, sometimes not. My mother was a substitute school teacher. She hadn't finished college, but she was an excellent school teacher, extremely strict [laughter], but very humorous.

I entered third grade in 1919 in Leal School, which I have learned is still functioning, and then entered Thornburn Junior High School in 1923.

My mother, like some other mothers in the town--I think now, mistakenly--thought that children should be accelerated in school, so I skipped eighth grade and entered University High School in '24.

RL: Where did you feel you lost out by being accelerated?

Huff: Chiefly socially. From then on, I was always two years younger than most of my friends, or most of the other students, and I'm a slow starter in everything [laughter], and I certainly was socially!

RL: It doesn't sound as though you were slow in reading.

Huff: No, that I latched onto fairly early.

RL: Do you remember learning how to read?

Huff: I started out with a newspaper, and I'd try myself to identify words, and then my father taught me the alphabet in the correct order. I don't think it took very long. My vocabulary must have been rather deplorable, being drawn from a newspaper in my first year of reading. [Laughter]

RL: What did you enjoy most in school?

Huff: In grade school?

RL: Yes.

Huff: [Pauses to think] I think English and history. Well, I liked geography also. I didn't do well in music, and I didn't like athletics. I was forced to take gymnasium classes, of course. I remember once I was forced to go out on a baseball field with the girls' class. I knew nothing of baseball. I was shown a chart, a diagram, and I stood in a position. I don't know really now what--is there a position called "outfield?"

RL: Yes.

Huff: It must have been that. In any case, one of my classmates batted the ball. It soared very high and far, and I thought, "Oh, my goodness! It's going to go in the garden over there," and jumped and caught it. And everybody praised me, and I couldn't imagine why I was being praised! [Laughter] Then I learned what a fly was--that kind!

I disliked sewing when I got to seventh grade and was forced to take that.

RL: Did you receive a good education in the Bible?

Huff: Chiefly self-taught. I read the Old Testament again two years ago. I read it in the Authorized version, of course, for the style more than anything, and there are good stories in it too. [Laughter]

RL: Absolutely. But formally you didn't receive a grounding in Sunday school?

Huff: Oh, I went to Sunday school from the age of seven on. The minister in those years was the father of a professor now on the Berkeley campus; I haven't seen him since he was a boy. Van Deusen Kennedy. Do you know him?

RL: I should. The name rings a bell.

Huff: What department is he in? Business Administration, I think. His father was Melville T. Kennedy and he was the pastor of the First Congregational Church in Champaign. I was taught in Sunday school by Mrs. Melville Kennedy, Van Deusen's mother. The family had lived in India at one time and the effect was shown in a few Anglicisms in the sermons--futile, for example--and in the Eton collars that the four sons wore to church.

RL: Somehow I'm getting from you the picture of a rather isolated sort of life. Perhaps that's wrong.

Huff: I always had quite good friends among my classmates, and one of my oldest friends to this day I met when I entered third grade in Urbana and she was in fourth, and we're still in close touch. She's retiring as a professor of French at Lawrence College this year. She was the daughter of a professor of English at Urbana named Harry Stuart Vedder Jones, a delightful man. I was first attracted to Anne by the fact that her fourth grade reader was so much more sophisticated than my third grade one. [Laughter] I would walk home from school with her and ask if I could read some in her book. The readers used in the Urbana schools then, I recall, were a series entitled "The Mother Tongue."

RL: And your sister is two years younger than you are?

Huff: Three. She was born in 1915. She now lives in San Francisco.

RL: Did you have much to do with your sister or did the three-year age gap make you very different individuals?

Huff: We were not close. I've never studied psychology and I cannot explain it. I was always very fond of Virginia. She was extremely pretty and I admire her good looks, having been short-changed on that side. [Chuckle] I am consoled somewhat by a remark that Imogen Cunningham made to a reporter a few years ago: she attributed her having worked hard and become successful to her plainness. Virginia was extremely stylish, and to my way of thinking, a bit selfish. When it became popular to have fur coats--I don't like fur coats because I don't like hunting, really--even though we were in the Depression and my parents could ill afford it, Virginia begged so much that she received a fur coat [laughter]--not an expensive one. I didn't want one.

And she was much more precocious socially than I in dating, and she was a good athlete--ice-skating and tennis. She still plays tennis all the time and she's a good player.

When I left home, she was a sophomore in college. And despite the fact that she still recalls to this day that in an IQ test at the high school when she was a freshman and I was a senior, she received the highest marks in the school--my mother is the only detective in the world that could have found that out, but she did--

RL: I was going to ask whether such things were not supposed to be confidential?

Huff: I should have thought so. I don't know what my marks were at all, and I don't know what Virginia's were, but she probably knows. Anyway, despite that, she dropped out of college after I left, and never went back, and married an accountant.

University High School

Huff: In high school, I continued to study English every year, of course, and Latin and French, both of which I continued in college. I don't remember any notable students in University High, notable then or later. I was fortunate in having two gifted teachers of English, Liesette McHarry and Genevieve Duguid.

RL: Did your father have a reasonable library, or was there a good public library?

Huff: Oh, yes. My father collected books all his life. I think he had a good library--English and American literature chiefly, though there was quite a lot of history in it too. And as a student at University High, I enjoyed the privilege of using the university library, which is a good one, and was then, I think. I rarely went to the Urbana Public [Library] because like most public libraries I think it held chiefly popular and current things.

RL: What have you carried with you as part of your literary treasury from those school years, either what you were taught or what you read on your own?

Huff: Chiefly English poetry, I think, which I mostly read on my own, though I had the usual courses in Chaucer and Shakespeare and the Romantics and so on. I read Dickens when I was very, very young and my father was so happy. My mother wasn't because I'd sit down with a volume in the morning and if she asked me at four o'clock to go down to the Cox Bakery for a loaf of bread I'd be furious. [Laughter] My father was delighted and he bought me a set of the Scribner edition, with the original illustrations, of the complete works, which I have in my bedroom.

RL: Did you take part in the extracurricular activities in school?

Huff: Yes. In both high school and college I did some work that was most enjoyable with theatrical groups. What's the name of that play that was so popular, about the strict nuns in a nunnery and a baby fallen into their hands some way, which they brought up? Cradle Song. I played the stern mother superior. [Laughter]

RL: Did this earn you Brownie points at home with your mother?

Huff: Did it what?

RL: I got the impression that you felt that certainly your mother and perhaps to some extent your father favored Virginia, and I wondered whether your success on the stage got you good ratings at home?

Huff: I don't think they did favor her, really. I think perhaps she thought they favored me, and I don't think they did that either. I think on that score they were remarkably fair. They were interested in what she was doing and in what quite different things I was doing. I tried to encourage her to join some of the sorts of activities that I did, but they weren't to her taste.

RL: How large was the student body at University High School?

Huff: I think it was between 150 and 200. Because the class in which I entered in 1924 had several of those over-young students, it was known as the kindergarten class, and it had an unusually low mortality rate over the four years; practically everyone who entered finished, and I think fifty of us graduated, most of the children then going on to the local university [University of Illinois]. The Depression was just not quite here in '28. It was soon to come.

So, I lived at home all those years. Tuition, as I recall, was twenty-five dollars a semester, so almost anyone could afford it.

University of Illinois, 1928-1932

RL: Was there an entrance exam for university?

Huff: No.

When I read about the remedial English in Berkeley at the University--it was quite the other way around in my day at Urbana. All entering freshmen were given a three-hour test in English which consisted of being given a long essay--I remember I was given one of Charles Lamb's--and reading it, and within three hours writing a précis of it of a certain length, and I can't remember what that length was. If the student received good marks, he was excused from the required rhetoric course, so I never had that. Many of the students, of course, entered the university in as deplorable a condition in regard to written English as many do now.

RL: Obviously your family had already made a commitment to education, but was it expected that girls at that time should go on to the university, let's say, in the general population of Urbana?

Huff: Well, of course, in Urbana I was mostly with children of faculty and other university employees. As far as I knew, it was generally the case that the girls as well as the boys would go on. But there must have been families on what Mother would call "the wrong side of the tracks" that didn't send their daughters or their sons to college.

RL: Was there any black population in Urbana then?

Huff: Very little. I don't remember any Negro children. I say "Negro" because our part-time maid, when she first came and I used the word "black" corrected me. [Chuckle] I don't remember any in my class. I remember seeing them from time to time on the streetcar or bus, but there must have been less than perhaps fifty. I wouldn't have objected to them in my class certainly. Mother had a rather--again--midwestern, conservative, provincial view of them; she was a bit haughty, I think.

RL: You mentioned the Depression. Did this affect your family very much?

Huff: Well, I left home after college. I don't think so. They didn't--let's see. [Pauses to think] As far as I can remember, they didn't lose the house that they had bought, a big house. Mother converted it and made quarters for graduate students. They didn't lose the house. I really don't know in their day-to-day lives how much they were affected. Needless to say, they had no investments. They might have lost a savings account. I don't know.

I remember Mother talking years later, when I'd come home for a holiday, about the hideous sights in downtown Urbana and downtown Champaign; you know, those are twin cities, so called. Hundreds and hundreds of people from farms and small villages around queued up by the banks; their life savings had gone.

RL: Had you thought of going away to college?

Huff: I wanted to, of course; everyone did.

At the end of my sophomore year I went to Professor Clarissa Rinaker, who taught a famous course called "Dr. Johnson and his Circle," which I'd enjoyed and in which I'd done rather well, and asked her--I must already have written to Columbia for application blanks. I wanted to take my last two years at Columbia; I don't remember why now. And she said, "I don't think you have a chance. There are so many applicants and they probably favor people from the East, but I'll write a letter recommending you," which she did, and I did not receive a scholarship. [Laughter] So, I continued and graduated from Illinois in '32 with a major in English and a minor in French.

Huff: Two or three of the courses were ones that I liked so much that I wonder now why I didn't make my profession in that field-- I thought of it--entomology, and it fascinated me from the beginning. Of course, woods and fields and all around Urbana where I bicycled all the time were full of interesting insects, and though my study doesn't look it, I tend to have an orderly sort of mind, and I loved classifying insects and studying them. I still have the textbook by Comstock that I had then. I thoroughly enjoyed the courses I took with Professor Metcalf and his assistant, Carl Otto Mohr. But I didn't even take a minor in that, and so I finished, graduating with honors in English.

I spent a year not knowing what to do really--odd jobs once in a while. I typed quite well; I had learned to type in high school. You may cancel this if you consider it obscene. One summer a graduate student in psychology had asked me if I'd type a master's thesis, and that was going to represent something like twenty-five dollars; it was tremendous. I said, "Yes, I would like to," and she said, "It's on puberty. You don't mind?" I said, "I don't know what it means. I'll type anything." [Laughter] I was about fourteen or fifteen.

RL: When you read the thesis, how did you react to it?

Huff: I found it dull. It didn't shock me, but it seemed frightfully dull, as I recall. It was quite long.

RL: That brings up something I had thought of asking you. Was there anything roughly equivalent to what is now called "Social Living," any formal sex education in the schools?

Huff: The only thing that I ever encountered was that upon entering college, all the girls had to go, I think, into the gymnasium and be given a lecture by a woman, and all the boys in another part of it were being given some other lecture, and that's all there was. It wasn't very much. [Chuckle] Oh, well, you can always cut these things out. The only thing that I carried away from that lecture was the lecturer's saying, "I just hate to hear girls refer to the 'curse'--it's a blessing."

RL: Before we get into Radcliffe and your graduate work, I would like to ask you some more questions about your undergraduate years, which you've skipped over very fast.

Huff: Yes. I don't remember them. [Laughter]

- RL: It sounds from what you say that it wasn't an exciting experience as it is for many people, that you slipped more or less from the University High School into university, or did I misread you?
- Huff: That's true. That's absolutely true. I didn't see much difference, really. The University High School in those days was affiliated with or attached to the Department of Education on the campus, and in every class we would be taught a few times by practice teachers who were students, and I got to know some of them. And then I used the university library. So there wasn't enough that was new and strange to me.
- RL: Were the university students predominantly from Illinois?
- Huff: I can't really say how many came from out of state. A very large number came from Chicago. But there was always quite a large community of Chinese students.
- RL: Really? I didn't know that.
- Huff: A street near ours, Illinois Street, was called then China Street because there were so many Chinese living in boarding houses there.
- RL: Do you know the historical reason for that?
- Huff: I have no idea.
- RL: Were you interested at all in that district as you were growing up?
- Huff: No.
- RL: Was there any sort of Chinatown accessible to Westerners?
- Huff: I don't think there were any Chinese families; I think there were simply Chinese students, and all that I ever met were boys. Once Mrs. [Albert] Olmstead arranged for a blind date for me with a Chinese student, and I had a delightful time. I think I was a freshman in college. Mother sat up until I came home; she was sure that some fiendish Oriental practice would be [laughter] put over on me! But, of course, not at all.

There was one Chinese restaurant in Champaign, a dingy little place up on the second floor of a building, and I didn't go into it until many years later because Mother assured me from the heights of her inscrutable wisdom that everything Chinese was filthy.

RL: Was the theme of the "Yellow Peril" much in the air?

Huff: I didn't even hear that expression until I was at Radcliffe, in fact, in the later years [late '30s] at Radcliffe. Again, a midwesterner from Kansas, a girl in my dorm, used to use it. I think her father, who was an extremely wealthy banker and mill owner in Kansas, probably felt a real fear of competition.

I took a course from Albert Lybyer in modern Far Eastern history. I adored him--he gave me a copy of one of his students' theses. I see it from time to time advertised in the bookdealers' catalogues--it's a paperback on Ch'ing palaces, and in one of the University of Illinois series on the social sciences.* I'm sure Joe [Professor Joseph R. Levenson] would have known it. But I didn't find the course enjoyable because it was mostly trade. I mean, we started Far Eastern history at about 1500, and I always wondered, "What went on before?"

RL: Would you now describe it as biased?

Huff: Well, if I don't do Mr. Lybyer an injustice, I'd say that it was completely of an American and European orientation. It seemed to me that he looked upon the Philippines, China, and Japan--he looked upon those countries as sources of profit to the West. I don't think I'm being wrong in that. Of course, that was quite natural [chuckle] in the Middle West. I don't think that the library began to collect Far Eastern books there until the late '40s when Mr. Downs, Librarian, empowered Charles Tuttle to send publications in certain classes.

RL: In some ways, it seems to me very progressive that a course of that sort was being taught at that time.

Huff: Yes. It must have been 1930.

RL: You wouldn't have found it at Oxford or Cambridge.

Huff: Wouldn't have?

*Carroll Brown Malone, History of the Peking Summer Palaces under the Ch'ing Dynasty, vol. XIX nos. 1-2 in the series Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences. E.T. Williams wrote the foreword. E.H.

RL: No, not history--languages, yes.

Huff: Yes, of course, in the great 18th and 19th century tradition. You spoke of the "Yellow Peril." That expression wasn't used, but there was a sad example of prejudice. A very distinguished scientist, and I cannot remember what field he was in, named Kudo--I don't know his first name--was brought to Illinois from Japan. I remember being told years later that he was of very distinguished lineage. He married an American woman and they had two daughters. While Mother was courteous to them, she would never have become friendly, and practically the whole of the town--there must have been exceptions in the university in his department, but the families of the children's schoolmates and things like that were cold at least, and really snobbish about it. Well, I think the Lybyers were an exception; I believe they lived in the same apartment building as the Kudos.

RL: It's somewhat progressive to have appointed a Japanese as a faculty member.

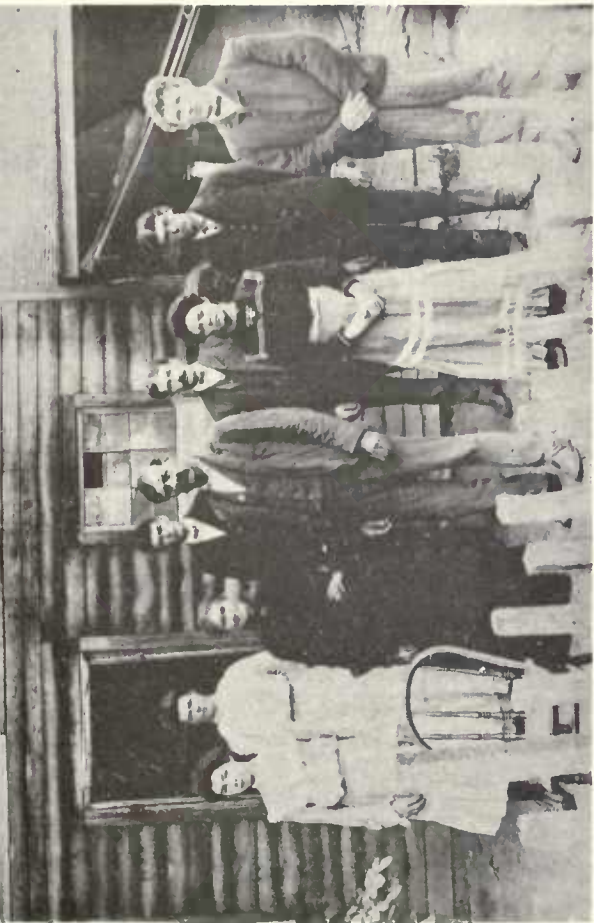
Huff: The Oriental students seemed to like Urbana very much. This reflects not my observations as a student but my E.A.L. [East Asiatic Library, Berkeley] experience--staff members who took M.L.S. degrees at Illinois. I have no particular affection for it, but they do. It was charming when I was young.

RL: What sorts of music and theater were available to you?

Huff: [Pauses to think] There was a program at Urbana, from the earliest times I can remember, called the Star Course, and the campus brought notable musicians, and a variety of artists, shows, and lecturers. I think there were usually five programs through the winter, and my family--I don't know how--was able always to buy tickets for the four of us. I must have started attending those when I was no more than eight or nine, and they went on right through college. But for that, I probably should have grown up in dark ignorance of such delights as Paderewski. Jim [Professor James G.] Randall took me to that concert and sat and sketched, and Paderewski stopped in the middle and turned his gaze onto Jim. [Laughter] It was dreadful! Gilbert and Sullivan--I saw several of their operas.

RL: I'm really surprised! I wouldn't have thought those would have gone over well.

- Huff: Galla Curci. Oh, yes. I'll tell you. Well, except for the people who were comparatively wealthy and who could drive or take the train up to Chicago for opera and symphony, most of the people there were sort of half starved for that sort of thing.
- RL: Was the Chautauqua circuit still going or was Urbana too sophisticated a place to use Chautauqua?
- Huff: I heard my father talk about going to the Chautauqua when he was a boy, but, of course, he lived in Sangamon County, which was quite rural. I don't remember it at all. The only slightly similar things that I remember were the Champaign County Fairs-- best cake, best quilt. Oh, I remember my father speaking of Chautauqua because he never tired of telling of a barker at one of the shows who stood outside his tent and cried, "Come one! Come all! He's alive! He's a-living! Half man, half hoss!" [Laughter] Your poor typist!
- RL: Did you go on acting at the university?
- Huff: Yes. I had to do all sorts of things I had no taste for because of Mother. I was forced to--well, she persuaded me--to join the Y.W. [Young Women's Christian Association], and I held an office in the Y.W. at one point. I can't imagine how I could have done, but I did. I don't remember which office it was--secretary or something. I went on some of their parties and picnics. I must have done some other activities. It seemed to me I was always not having enough time in the evening for studying, because I had to do something outside. I can't tell you how long ago it all seems. [Laughter]



James Orton Huff, father of Elizabeth Huff and his family, ca. 1900. Left to right, Hulda, Minnie, Mrs. Huff, Nolan, Lawrence Huff, son, Belle, Samuel, James Orton.



Mother, Elizabeth Emeline Eggleston Huff with baby Elizabeth, 1912.



Father and Elizabeth, 1914.



Virginia and Elizabeth Huff, 1924.



Elizabeth Huff, Urbana graduate

II JOBS AND GRADUATE SCHOOLS: RADCLIFFE, MILLS, COLUMBIA,
RADCLIFFE, 1932-1939

Guardian of the Chalice of Antioch, Chicago World's Fair, 1933

Huff: Well, in '33, the--I'm not certain when the College of Fine and Applied Arts was established there; I think it must have been by that time. In any case, the new building was built and the library was there, and Rexford Newcomb was the dean. I had had courses from him. And I spent a great deal of my time in '32 to '33 reading in the field of art. In my junior year, the university had brought from Princeton its first professor of the history of art, Alfred Nicholson, who specialized in Italian painting. I had taken all the courses that he offered in those two years and was quite infatuated with the idea of studying Italian art.

Then in the spring the Chicago Tribune began to talk about the "Century of Progress," which was the World's Fair in Chicago in '33.

One of the most famous professors, who was later to go to Chicago and the Oriental Institute, was Albert Ten Eyck Olmstead. He and his wife were friends of my parents, and among his friends was one named Fahim Kouchakji, who lived in New York and, I believe, dealt in a very superior manner in his Park Avenue apartment in antiquities. He was then the possessor of the Chalice of Antioch, which is now in the Metropolitan [Museum] and has been for only a few years strangely enough. Have you heard of the Chalice of Antioch?

RL: No, I haven't.

Huff: The Met. bought it for some incredible amount a few years ago, but it took Fahim that many years to sell it, if indeed Fahim was still living; I don't know.

Huff: Well, Fahim had written to Mr. Olmstead about it and he said he would like to display it in the Hall of Religion, and he would have an elderly scholar named Eisen, who did research on it for years and years and years and years and years, prepare a simplified version of his findings and publish it for sale. It's a beautiful little book--a colored plate and then many black and white plates and a text.

So, it was all arranged, and then Fahim Kouchakji asked Mr. Olmstead, I think, to recommend people who could give a fifteen-minute lecture twice an hour and Mr. Olmstead kindly recommended me.

So, I went up to Chicago. A friend, Catherine Schroeder, the daughter of a most noted surgeon, William Edward Schroeder, gave me free quarters in an apartment building that her step-mother owned, I believe, and it was within walking distance of the Illinois Central. I could walk down to 53rd Street and ride up to the fairgrounds. I can't remember now how they designated the location. It was on the lake.

So, I worked there all summer for fifteen dollars a week, had a hamburger every noon, and on every payday, which was Friday, I had also a glass of tomato juice. [Laughter]

RL: What was the chalice?

Huff: The chalice [demonstrates cup shape with her hands]--I wish I had the book but I couldn't find it--is a very crude metal cup without a base--it doesn't stand--lip turned over slightly, rather notched and dented, encased in an openwork silver casing that stands on a small pedestal. And there are various supposed Christian motifs with Greek vines and fish and so forth--beautifully worked. And then there are thirteen upright oval panels, in each of which is a portrait, one being taken to be Christ, and I don't know whether they have identified all of the others or not, but various of the disciples; they are distinctly portraits; the faces are quite unlike and, of course, some of them have the traditional attributes in their hands.

So, I would lecture for fifteen minutes and then sit at a little table outside the booth and sell the books for fifteen minutes.

RL: What was the chalice dated at?

Huff: In those days, of course, they didn't have the tests they have now. I think that Fahim believed it was 2nd century, that the chalice had probably been used at the Last Supper and probably several generations later had been furnished, after the Christian movement was becoming stronger, with this elaborate setting.

I met some remarkable people there and received some remarkable gifts. A manufacturer of powdered milk, Mr. Horlick, sent me enough--I wish I'd had it in internment camp; it would have kept us all in milk for ages, and I don't drink milk!

A mighty, mighty Texan strode in one day carrying a leather pouch, which was clearly heavy, and he listened to my story and then, when I sat down at the table, he said, "I'll take twelve copies." And to my astonishment, he opened his pouch and drew out twelve silver dollars! [Laughter]

RL: Who else did you meet?

Huff: [Pauses to think] Mostly it was just the people working in the pavilion--the man who was explaining the Lord's Prayer engraved on the head of a pin [laughter], that sort of thing. And there was a--it may have been the Mormon Tabernacle; I don't know--something done in ivory to scale. As I recall, an organ played softly in the background. Oh, dear! I don't know how I endured it all. [Laughter]

RL: It sounds like a terrible job. Did you manage to enjoy it?

Huff: Not really, For one thing, the heat was unbearable, of course. The building wasn't air-conditioned. My whole idea was to save some money and, strangely enough, I did. I think the Fair was extended. I think that it was to have closed earlier than it did, and I think it went on till November or so. And I had saved enough money to buy my parents some small gifts--anything from Marshall Field's just sent my mother into a rapture [laughter]--and to take me to Cambridge by bus and support me for one term.

A Semester at Radcliffe, 1934

RL: What had put the idea of studying at Radcliffe into your mind?

Huff: Hm. I can't say. I know that when I applied to Columbia earlier I had done some study of the Eastern colleges, and quite possibly Radcliffe had seemed attractive to me, though I decided to apply to Columbia.

So, in February of '34, I boarded a bus and went to Cambridge. I had been planning to go there to study with Arthur Kingsley-Porter, the great authority on Romanesque sculpture. I learned in the fall that he had taken his own life in Ireland, where he had a castle by the sea, but I went on to Radcliffe and took four different courses in history of art.

And that's what led me to China, because one of the courses was Langdon Warner's.

I took a course from George Chase in Greek archaeology, Greek sculpture, and I was torn; I really wanted to go into Greek sculpture. I knew more of Western art, but I thought, "I can never learn Greek. I'm much too old." I was almost twenty-two! So, I elected the Far East, because Langdon Warner was one of those, and I hope that he was the last to think that way, who said that it would be foolish to try to learn Chinese or Japanese just for the study of the art. It was what you saw in it that was important; it wasn't what they said about their own art.
[Laughter]

RL: Could he validate that for his generation?

Huff: Well, none of his students could be critical at that time. Only years later, when I had learned to read Chinese passably, did I see how wrong he was really, because every person sees and writes about an art object, I think, in his own way, and therefore I think many views are important; out of the whole, you come closer to the painting. Of course, there is a lot of repetition, but so is there in Western critical literature.

It was Pearl Harbor that took me out of the art field finally.

In any case, I loved that semester at Radcliffe. I was frightfully impressed with the old brick walks and the old buildings and Harvard Yard.

Huff: At that time, although the colleges of Radcliffe and Harvard were more clearly separated than they are now, graduate students at Radcliffe had almost all their courses, certainly in the smaller departments, in the Harvard Yard.

[Speaking to dog] Do you want to come up, Chin-po? [Dog jumps up and sneezes. Laughter]

RL: Had you had the experience of seeing good art museums before you went to the Boston area? I imagine in Chicago you'd had the chance.

Huff: Yes. The friend whom I mentioned as giving me lodgings during the Fair had invited me to see the sights beginning when I was fourteen, and the Art Institute was the first museum. The University of Illinois at that time had none. The only art I had seen was in a hall of plaster casts [chuckle] in Lincoln Hall. But at fourteen I first saw the Art Institute, the Field Museum of Natural History, and the Planetarium; they're all in a row there as you go up Lake Shore Drive.

Well, there are probably a number of factors which, all brought together, add up to what caused me to go East. And once I got to Radcliffe I spent lots of time on the subway and the bus and the streetcar going out to the M.F.A. [Museum of Fine Arts]. [Ananda Kentish] Coomaraswamy was there then. I never met him. He was curator of the Oriental collection.

RL: Was your semester at Radcliffe some sort of liberation? I don't want to project my own experience onto you, and I realize that by the way I phrase the questions I'm risking doing that.

Huff: [Pauses to think] I think it was.. I remember when I came home for the summer--I'm not proud of this, but it's true--my sister in a conversation with me on the front steps told me one day that my spoken English had suffered lamentably [laughter]; it had a rich Harvard accent. Well, of course, it didn't. I had probably in a snobbish kind of, I hope unconscious, way picked up some pronunciations that were unlike those in Urbana.

Mills College, Oakland, Studying Oriental Art

Huff: But I had a bit of good luck before I left Radcliffe. Alfred Salmony, then the great authority on Scythian art and later also on early Chinese jade, was fleeing from Germany--the spring of '34. He had been--I won't try to pronounce the name in German; my umlauts aren't very good--curator at the museum in Cologne. Aurelia Henry Reinhardt, the very distinguished, magnificent president at Mills [College], had appointed him there. I suppose he started the Far Eastern art courses at Mills. Mr. [Otto J.] Maenchen was to succeed him later. She [Aurelia Henry Reinhardt] wrote to Mr. Salmony that she would give him the disposal of two graduate fellowships of \$1,000 each if he wanted to offer them to students he might meet on his way to Mills.

So, he came up to Harvard and talked to Langdon Warner and went down to Columbia--I don't know with whom he talked there--and with the result that he chose me from Radcliffe and a girl named Jane Martin from Columbia. I don't know what ever became of Jane. Well, I was delighted. I never knew that there was as much money as \$1,000 in a single purse. [Laughter]

And I went home by bus and spent the rest of the summer starting to learn Russian because Alfred Salmony read it and much of the literature about Scythian bronzes is in Russian. I never succeeded [chuckle], once I became busy with classes, and it wasn't being taught at Mills either; it still isn't.

Then I took the Illinois Central to Chicago, transferred to a cross-country train, on which I traveled by coach to Oakland--this sounds rather like an exaggeration, but I don't think it is; I think it was a five-day trip, perhaps five days and four nights. And grimy. You can imagine how dirty the trains were then. I have never, never, any place, felt as dirty as I did when I reached Oakland. And I found my way to a streetcar in Oakland and took it to Mills. A streetcar then ran above Mills on the east side; it no longer does.

On the streetcar, I had left my seat to go up and ask the conductor how close we were to Seminary Avenue, I think it was, and laid my only good, new, proud possession on the seat, a pair of white pigskin gloves, and when I came back they were gone.

RL: Oh, dear!

Huff: And I would have done nothing. I didn't think there was anything to do. The woman in front of me must have taken them and must have been suffering with the most outrageous conscience [chuckle] because she turned around and said, "If you say anything about this, I'll wring your neck." [Laughter]

RL: Good gracious!

Huff: What an introduction to California! So, I stumbled down the hill in back of Mills and went into Mills Hall, which held then the main dining room on one floor, the first floor, and lounges, and the graduate dorm above, and bats in the attic above. And, oh, the way they used to circle those halls! [Laughter] And I was greeted by Anna Brinton, the famous Quaker. She and her husband Howard, also a famous member of the [Society of] Friends in this country, were both at Mills, and Anna was dean of the graduate school at that time. She assigned me a room and gave me some words of wisdom such as, "Always remember that the first thing to do is to take good care of the creature self." [Laughter]

RL: How helpful!

Huff: Something I wasn't very good at and never have been, really. I liked her very, very much. I saw her after the war in Pennsylvania.

So, I settled into a small room in Mills Hall. It's now the administration building, and the daughter of a friend of mine whom I helped ease into Mills a year and a half ago, when I visited her on the campus and said, "Oh, that's where I lived." She said, "You didn't sleep in Mills Hall!" [Laughter] Slept and ate and drank. We'd keep California wine, which was fifty cents a gallon, as I remember.

RL: Was that a new experience for you?

Huff: Yes. Yes, we had nothing at home. I think my father would have enjoyed beer, but Mother wouldn't have tolerated that.

RL: W.C.T.U. [Women's Christian Temperance Union]?

Huff: I don't know whether she was a member, but she was of that persuasion. She was an extremely strict woman. Once my father was repairing a bookcase in the living room--I was eight or nine

Huff: at the time--he struck his thumb with the hammer and said, "Damnation," [softly] with just about that emphasis. Mother came storming in from the kitchen and said, "If you ever use that word again, and especially in front of the children, I shall leave you."

RL: Extraordinary!

Huff: Yes, it seems so now. Little children on the street use so much worse language. [Chuckle]

At Mills at that time in the same dormitory corridor was Helen Burwell Chapin, who had, after her graduation from Bryn Mawr, worked for some time under Coomaraswamy at the M.F.A. in Boston and then at the same time, by chance, had come to Mills. Aurelia Henry Reinhardt had given her enough of a position, as I recall, to support her and then she took courses also from Alfred Salmony. A marvelous woman. She had lived many years in the Far East, traveled all over Japan, China, and Korea. One summer in Korea she hadn't much money and she wanted to travel up north into the Diamond Mountains and she knew that travelers were given lodgings in Buddhist temples. So, she had her hair cut in a mannish fashion, dressed like a man, and slept in the monasteries in North Korea all that summer. She wrote many very good articles and did some translating of Chinese poetry which Rosalind Keep, who had the Eucalyptus Press at Mills, published.

Shall I tell you Helen's most outstanding performance at Mills?

RL: Oh, please.

Huff: At the end of the corridor upon which I had a room--and she, I think, lived on the same one--was a great barn of a place with stalls containing bathtubs and showers. Helen--I think it was every evening--enjoyed her ablutions. They seemed to invigorate her. And she'd come out of the shower or tub singing and dancing, usually with nothing on, and what she was singing--and she was tone deaf, mind you--was "Jesus Lover of My Soul" in Chinese. We used to wait for it. It was one of the high points of the day! [Laughter] She was the one who, needless to say, usually because she was quite hysterical, used to run into a bat on that occasion, and then the song would change into screams of passionate agony! [Laughter]

RL: Mills seems to have been a remarkable place.

Huff: Yes. Aurelia Henry Reinhardt was a most remarkable woman, I think. I liked her very much, and in those days it was small enough; I think she really knew all of the graduate students quite well. Every Christmas she would call probably all of the graduate students into her house, have a fire in the grate-- Maryon Monahan remembers this because her husband, Thomas, was related to Aurelia, and Thomas was the one who always was much around at Christmas time and the one chosen to open all of Aurelia's presents. And then Maryon was there on many occasions.

Anyway, Aurelia would call us in, and after some idle conversation and chatter, she would stand, a very queenly woman, tall and erect, and read from Dickens' Christmas Carol to us, and it was delightful.

RL: Do you have any idea how she raised the money for things such as Mr. Salmony's stipend and your fellowship?

Huff: I heard that much of her time was spent in fundraising, and I know she made friends of people--the only one I met among the wealthy people whom she came to know was Albert Bender. She made friends among wealthy people in San Francisco and here, and I think many of them gave either money or objects. Albert Bender gave rare books and some art objects. But beyond that, I don't know the details at all. There was nothing like the very expensive solicitation and advertising that Mills goes through now.

RL: And what was the caliber of the student body? We'll start with the graduate students, because you must have known them better than the undergraduates.

Huff: Yes. I didn't know the undergraduates, I think. Maybe I knew a few, but I don't remember them. The caliber of the graduate students was quite good. Mary Montgomery was then Aurelia Henry Reinhardt's secretary and was studying for her Master's too. She did very well in--what did she take it in?--history. She later took her Ph.D. here [University of California, Berkeley]. Helen Chapin, of course, was outstanding. I suppose if I'd take out that old photo album and see some of the pictures I'd recall all their names. I'm not in touch with as many of those students as I am with ones I knew in earlier years.

Huff: Some of the students, graduate as well as undergraduate, helped pay their way by waiting on tables in the dining room, and it was a marvelous atmosphere; not a single person would have thought of scorning them for having to do this. No, we were just as friendly with them as with anybody who was lucky enough to have \$1,000. [Chuckle]

RL: How did you feel the quality of the education was compared with Radcliffe?

Huff: Slightly inferior. In general, the professors, I think, weren't as distinguished. Alfred Salmony was one of the most distinguished; there were others too. Roi Partridge and Imogen Cunningham were there. I keep seeing references to Dixy Lee Ray.* Do you know her?

RL: No. Had Darius Milhaud arrived while you were at Mills?

Huff: No. His predecessor--Marchant--was a tall and handsome American, and he could often be seen strolling about the campus with Aurelia, who was slightly taller than he, and she always had her arm through his. [Laughter] He was very handsome. He had some nice concerts in Lissner Hall.

Most of our entertainment was off the campus, of course, including the almost weekly dinner when we'd take the streetcar down Seminary Avenue, turn north on San Pablo to the Oakland mole, take a ferry across to the city, and walk to Chinatown. There were either four or five of us always in a group. We'd eat at the Tao Yuan, which I think is no longer there. It was a charming basement restaurant on Clay. We ordered, four or five of us, bowls of rice, and four or five ts'ai. I'll try to keep Chinese words out of this.

RL: That's not necessary.

Huff: And the cost was always fifty cents a person.

RL: [Chuckle] Happy days!

*Zoologist, Marine Biologist and government official, Mills, B.A. 1937, M.A. 1938, Stanford Ph.D., 1945. Member Atomic Energy Commission, 1972--. Elected Governor of the state of Washington, 1976.

The Mills Chinese Exhibition

Huff: Professor Salmony formed a group called Friends of Far Eastern Art, and he attracted members from all around the Bay. Then he planned an exhibition, and it ran from October to November of 1934, called simply "Chinese Exhibition," which was quite a notable one because Professor Salmony borrowed objects not only from California collectors and Eastern collectors, but also from European ones--[Adolphe] Stoclet of Brussels and, I think, the Musée Guimet.

The catalogue was in press, but hardly, when Dr. Salmony one evening fell down a flight of stairs from a tavern--that doesn't sound very fine--above a drugstore up on Seminary Avenue [laughter] and broke his leg. So, it was left to two of his students to see the catalogue through the press and to do all of the docent work in the exhibition. Toward the end of it, he was able to roll around the gallery in a wheelchair. It was at the show that I first met Peter Boodberg.

RL: Were you one of the students?

Huff: Yes. I suppose I was kind of the leader, certainly in seeing the catalogue through. It turned out very nicely. I still have the copy that Alfred Salmony gave me and inscribed in the somewhat, to me, embarrassing fashion as: "To my good angel."* [Laughter]

RL: Oh, how nice! What sort of people did he find to join the Friends of Far Eastern Art?

Huff: My impression was that they were largely well established people in the East Bay and San Francisco, business people, the sort that often are interested in art as an avocation and often in collecting. Albert Bender was the most active of them, I think.

RL: He was famous for contributions to many institutions, wasn't he?

Huff: Oh, yes. And he continued giving to Mills. The Mills Rare Book Collection, I think, is chiefly from him.

*Friends of Far Eastern Art First Chinese Exhibition, Mills College, California, 1934. Inscription of catalogue to Elizabeth Huff: "To the good spirit of this catalogue with the most sincerest thanks, Alfred Salmony."

RL: How much of the membership, do you think, was composed of the Jewish refugee community?

Huff: I never met any to know them as such, if there were many here.

RL: It must have been an exciting exhibition because there really was very little Oriental art on public display here until the Brundage opened.

Huff: The Brundage Collection, yes. Oh, there was practically nothing.

One of the pieces in the catalogue, a magnificent stone hand chopped off of a Buddha--you know how often that was done during the Japanese occupation-- I think it was purchased by the de Young Museum after the exhibition. It had been lent by a New York collector, H. Kevorkian, and it is still one of the loveliest things over there.

RL: I just saw that. It's extraordinary.

Visits and Expeditions

Huff: The college was closed during the Christmas holidays, and I was a very happy--I couldn't afford to go home--and lucky house guest of the James Caldwells, who were then on Tamalpais Road. He was a professor of English then, just starting out.

RL: Oh, how did you meet them?

Huff: Langdon Warner. Katherine had been a student of Langdon's, and he had furnished me with an introduction to her and her family.

RL: Was she at that point interested in Far Eastern art?

Huff: Oh yes. She took her Master's degree later under Otto Maenchen at Berkeley. She was very interested, and I think she has been from youth.

RL: She recently retired from teaching at Mills, didn't she?

Huff: Yes.

- RL: So, you lived in a Berkeley faculty member's house over the Christmas vacation.
- Huff: Oh, it was a very pretty house, and there I met Sara Bard Field, Katherine's mother.
- RL: Can you tell me anything about her? I should mention that she was interviewed by our office.*
- Huff: Oh, good! I remember meeting her during those holidays, and I remember her being at, I think it was, Christmas dinner at the Caldwell's. She, Sara Bard Field, had made a most delectable Christmas pudding with brandy in it. When it was served, we all tasted it and complimented her, and then Jim, James Caldwell, said, "Elizabeth, I'm sure you agree with me it needs more brandy," [laughter] which I think rather hurt Sara Bard Field's feelings, but he then added a dollop to my dessert and to his own. [Laughter] I don't remember much about her during that two weeks, but later I do. I'll come to that in a minute.

I can't say what month it was, but it was probably in April, Sara Bard Field and Charles Erskine Scott Wood invited me to their perfectly beautiful place in Los Gatos. I had a marvelous weekend, although I was so in awe of my hosts and the surroundings [laughter] that I was a bit shy.

After Sara Bard Field published the book of her poems called Darkling Plain,** Langdon Warner and I talked about it. I was absolutely horrified to discover that he, like other human beings, had feet of clay or a faulty memory. [Chuckle] He asked me what in the world the title came from, and I was so horrified that he didn't know "Dover Beach" [by Mathew Arnold]. [Laughter]

I talked, while I was there at Los Gatos--well, I should say "in" [Los Gatos]; they were in the town, but their place was called that too, of course. And they had two--I wonder if they are still there--two very handsome cats flanking the entrance gate off the road.

*Sara Bard Field, "Poet and Suffragist," in process.

**Sara Bard Field, Darkling Plain, New York, Random House, 1936.

RL: Stone?

Huff: Yes. It was Charles Erskine Scott Wood, I think, who showed me the grounds mostly. He had lots of olive trees, among other things, and he said, "Have you ever tasted a really fresh olive?" [Laughter] I said, "I never have, as a matter of fact." I hadn't. He said, "Let me pick a good one for you." He thought that was immensely funny when my whole face puckered up! [Laughter]

RL: Oh, dear!

Huff: Indoors mostly I think I chatted with Sara Bard Field. I think we talked mostly about English poetry, but, of course, I don't remember exactly. She seemed to have rather, or distinctly, a philosophical turn of mind, though she could be very practical, of course. But it was along those lines that she talked with me: what one should live for to be happy and to be useful, and so on. I suppose I talked like the average student. But it was all very, very nice.

RL: I doubt that it was average, on either side.

Huff: Not on hers.

RL: Did she talk about politics at all, about the suffragette movement?

Huff: I don't recall that. She was old enough to have been involved, wasn't she?

RL: Oh, she was very active indeed, and, in fact, drove two Swedish suffragettes across the country in 1912, which was an extraordinary feat on a number of levels, when you consider the mechanical state of cars, the state of the roads, and the thought of three women undertaking such a thing alone. The purpose of it was to attend the first major rally in the United States for women's suffrage.

Huff: Eight years before it came.

RL: Right. And she was a young woman at that time. She continued to be very active, certainly until 1920, and then I'm afraid I'm unclear as to what she did. Of course, I know of her work as a writer, but whether she was engaged in politics thereafter, I don't know.

Huff: I'm sure I should have remembered if she had sounded me out in such matters.

RL: Was there any suggestion that two people living together in that way was a risqué sort of thing to do?

Huff: It didn't seem so to me. I suppose it would have seemed so if they had been in their twenties, but they were not. [Laughter] It wouldn't seem so now to anyone, of course. But I think I recall that when Katherine told me about her mother and Colonel Wood--was he?--that there was a suggestion of tentativeness, as if she wondered if I would react strongly to it, which I didn't. It didn't make a particle of difference. They were married, in the end, in the '40s, I think.

He, by the way, lent two very nice pieces to the Chinese Exhibition, both blue glazes, both extraordinary. At Los Gatos he showed me a favorite piece, a large, quite early--Sung?--rabbit, probably tz'u-chon ware.

Then the last, another fortunate weekend I had, which was in early May, is the sort of thing that has made me want to help people younger and poorer than I when I can, because you can never help the same person that helped you. Florence Minard asked me to go with her to Yosemite in her car, a little old runabout, I think. Weren't they called that?

RL: Yes.

Huff: I had seen nothing outside of Oakland, except Los Gatos and Carmel. I used to go down with some of the students and sleep on the beach from time to time. I think there was among the students an extremely wealthy one, in my view, who had a car. [Laughter]

So, we set out, I think, one Friday. We stopped in Angel's Camp, where a former boyfriend of mine in Illinois was then a Congregational pastor. I loved Angel's Camp, but I was awfully glad I wasn't the wife of a minister. [Laughter] I think we stayed overnight there, and then we went on to Yosemite. As we approached it, flowers were blooming all along the Stanislaus River, wildflowers, and I was in a state of positive exhilaration before we reached the park. I'd never seen anything so lovely, I thought.

Huff: We stayed in the valley and didn't do much hiking. I don't know whether Florence Minard was a hiker or not. But we walked all around the easy places and had a lovely time.

Graduation with M.A. from Mills, 1935

Huff: Then I came back, prepared for exams, and finished in June. In those good old days, President Reinhardt herself handed each student her diploma and made a few appropriate remarks.

RL: What did she say to you?

Huff: I think it was something to the effect that Mills was proud to take part in the development of a new and important field of Oriental studies.

Catherine Schroeder, the friend whom I mentioned in some connection before, from Chicago, drove my mother out for the ceremonies, and we all drove back, stopping in Los Angeles, the first and last time I have ever stopped in Los Angeles, and in Santa Fe, which I enjoyed very much, and I've been back there several times. You've been in Santa Fe?

RL: Never.

Huff: I think it's charming.

RL: I'd love to see more of the Southwest.

Huff: There was a rather cruel trick that was played, I learned later, in the country in those days, and it was played upon us. There were long stretches between gasoline stations, of course, and we stopped when we found one. We were in a Pontiac sedan and the gas was almost gone. The chap filled it up and we paid him and drove off. That was near Albuquerque, just out of Albuquerque. The next town was Santa Fe, and the car came to a dead stop, nothing in sight. It seems that some of the owners of gas pumps would, in collusion, add water to the gas, so that we stopped and were headed northeast, and evidently had the tank filled by a man whose friend was at the next station in our direction and who was a mechanic of sorts. I think we walked probably twenty miles or so, and [laughter] there was nothing between Albuquerque and Santa Fe then. I don't know whether there is now or not.

RL: It must have been dreadfully hot.

Huff: Oh, yes! And the man at that next station drove back and managed to get the Pontiac going well enough so that we went, finally, into Santa Fe and put it into a garage. We were not about to prosecute the man. [Chuckle]

RL: Did you see much evidence of the Depression, the dust bowl migrants?

Huff: No. You see, we [went from] Southern California; across through Kingman; Flagstaff; Albuquerque; Santa Fe; Taos, which is very beautiful; and then over the Raton Pass to Denver. So we really did sort of half of an "S" around the real dust bowl.

RL: What did you go to Los Angeles for? It's a curious sort of loop to get back to Illinois.

Huff: I think that Catherine and probably my mother too wanted to see as many different parts of the country as they could, and they had gone to Mills from Chicago by the more northerly route through Cheyenne and Salt Lake City.

Summer Session at Columbia: Comments on Sinologists

Huff: Before I left Mills, I was told--and I must have applied for it, but I don't remember--that I had been awarded a fellowship to attend a special Oriental seminar at Columbia University for, I think it was, eight weeks in the summer of '35. The seminar was sponsored by A.C.L.S. When I told Anna Brinton of it, using the initials, she said, "Don't be glib! What is A.C.L.S.?" American Council of Learned Societies. So, I wasn't in Urbana very long before I went out to New York.

RL: That must have been exciting.

Huff: It was. It was really quite exciting. Hot! Oh! The dormitories weren't air-conditioned. Nothing was air-conditioned where I was.

RL: What subjects were you studying?

Huff: There were several lecturers, and they more or less covered the cultural aspects of both China and Japan. The senior lecturers

Huff: were Arthur Hummel, Sr., Luther Carrington Goodrich, Harold Henderson, and Tsunoda Ryūsaku. He is such a beloved figure at Columbia still. He's no longer living. I won't tell the story about him that I told Charles [Hamilton]. [Laughter]

RL: Oh, please do! You can take it out later.

Huff: Charles was astonished--he'd never heard it. Tsunoda was on the faculty of Columbia, of course, as were Goodrich and Henderson. He had an office in Low Memorial Library, where the meetings were held. He had an office off of the classroom, as I remember it, and from time to time he would ask one of the women students to come into his office for him to explain something further and then would show her mildly erotic Japanese prints. [Laughter]

We had courses such as one lecture, perhaps, on the elements of the Chinese language, and then many more lectures on history, literature in translation, going up, I think, in time as far as contacts between the Orient and the West.

RL: What was the level, at that time, of works accessible in Western languages? How good were the translations and what was the range of the material translated?

Huff: In Chinese, of course, the tradition started back in the 18th century in France, some quite good translations of things like the Tao te ching. I don't know how many hundreds of times that has been translated. A new one has just come out. And in England, perhaps, I think not until the 19th century, the early 19th century in England. The great monument, of course, was James Legge's translations of the classics, which are still good. Granted the then comparatively undeveloped state of research into the archaic language, not simply the graphs but also the word order and range of meanings of some of the characters, I think his work is very good.

Popular in England too from early days was translation of Chinese stories. Herbert Giles did the famous translations of those. Poetry--Giles and [W.J.B.] Fletcher, both English, I think--translated T'ang dynasty poetry. It was the T'ang that came in for, well quite rightly, I think, first consideration. Giles had a very fluent--one is tempted to say glib--style of translation, which was sometimes quite happy, as it turned out, but often quite unrelated to what one read as the tone in the Chinese poem. Fletcher was a bit more dignified.

Huff: There were some German translations. One of the best translators of both poetry and prose in the early part of this century was von Zach. He always signed himself "E. von Zach." His first name was Erwin. He was a marvelous student of Chinese who wrote always in prose.

Von Zach sent contributions to T'oung Pao when Paul Pelliot was editor, and they quarreled. And the way it came to the notice of the public was that in the next issue of T'oung Pao appeared a two- or three-line note signed "P.P.," saying, "E. von Zach had proved himself by his writing to be no scholar. He has further proved himself to be no gentleman. T'oung Pao will have nothing more to do with E. von Zach."

RL: Now, there's a phrase I've heard amongst Sinologists and Chinese historians--Pelliotisme.

Huff: Oh! [Laughter] Yes, he was famous for it. Usually his footnotes, in the aggregate, for any article, comprised many more words than the text.

RL: Do you think Pelliot was a destructive influence on Western scholarship?

Huff: I don't think so. I think he was constructive. You see, we are now in the midst--at least in regard to writers about literature, I should say--of an age where it is fashionable to be comparative--Pelliot would have scorned such a thing--and to be interpretive, which I'm sure he would have scorned also, and I can imagine that he is now vastly criticized. There was a saying at Radcliffe when I was there among all the students of Chinese: "Remember, we'll never offer a thing for publication as long as Pelliot lives." His reviews were so devastating. [Laughter]

RL: I think that's what I meant by destructive, that he so frightened people by his reviews that he inhibited publication of valuable material.

Huff: Oh. I think that's possible. We were serious. We were serious when we said that at Cambridge. Yes, I think that's so.

RL: And the effect was perhaps even more damaging in France where he had such an important position.

Huff: I think the most genial and perhaps most loved of the French Sinologists was Henri Maspero.

RL: Did you ever meet him?

Huff: No, I never met him. The only French Sinologist I've met was George Coedès. I met him in Hanoi years later.

RL: Who were your student colleagues at Columbia?

Huff: Yes, I was trying to think. I could think of only three. I have a picture of the whole group and I took it out to try to identify them. June Work, who later was to become assistant to Herrlee Glessner Creel at the University of Chicago, and still was that until she retired a few years ago, a delightful person. I've seen her fairly recently.

Leroy Davidson, who, with his wife Martha, had been at Mills when I was, and was also a student of Alfred Salmony. He is now-- I suppress Southern California so that I confuse the universities. He is a professor of Far Eastern art in Southern California, and I think at U.C.L.A.

And Marybelle Bouchard, who later married Willard Hanna. Do you know of him?

RL: No.

Huff: He's associated with some branch of, I think, the government that has to do with educational exchanges. In the years when I was in the East Asiatic Library, he and Marybelle would come through fairly often on their way to Hong Kong or back from Japan or something like that.

I don't remember other students. I remember their faces, but I don't remember their names.

RL: Did you have the opportunity to explore New York and enjoy it?

Huff: Oh, yes. Museums, you mean, and things like that. Yes. Not the theater and concerts so much because the fellowships weren't ample. [Laughter] I continued to eat Chinese food, thought it wasn't as good, and still to this day isn't, in either Washington, New York, or Boston, as it is here. At least, I never found the restaurants as good.

Filling Time and Earning Money: A Year as Periodicals Recorder
at the University of Chicago Library

RL: At the end of the course, what sorts of career plans or opportunities were open to you?

Huff: I had no plans, and I didn't know what to do except go back to Urbana and look for a job, and then I had another bit of great good luck. My friend Catherine Schroeder, now Mrs. Ralph Parker, was at that time the chief periodicals recorder in the University of Chicago library [Harper Library]. The two departments were entirely separate, Serials and Periodicals, and always fighting over something which one said was a serial and the other said was a periodical. [Laughter]

Well, there was an opening for just a plain recorder and Catherine offered it to me, and \$85 a month was richness in those days. I went up to Chicago and took a one-room apartment--well, it was one room and a kitchen--an apartment on Dorchester Street and within walking distance of the University of Chicago campus. There were seven rooms in that place. It was one of those horribly dingy old--if there are such things as wide row houses, it was that. There was no space between the houses. It was very big and very dingy. It had been converted. There were seven rooms, some occupied by men and some by women, and one bathroom, much frequented by a man whom I never saw, but who smoked the most evil cigars.

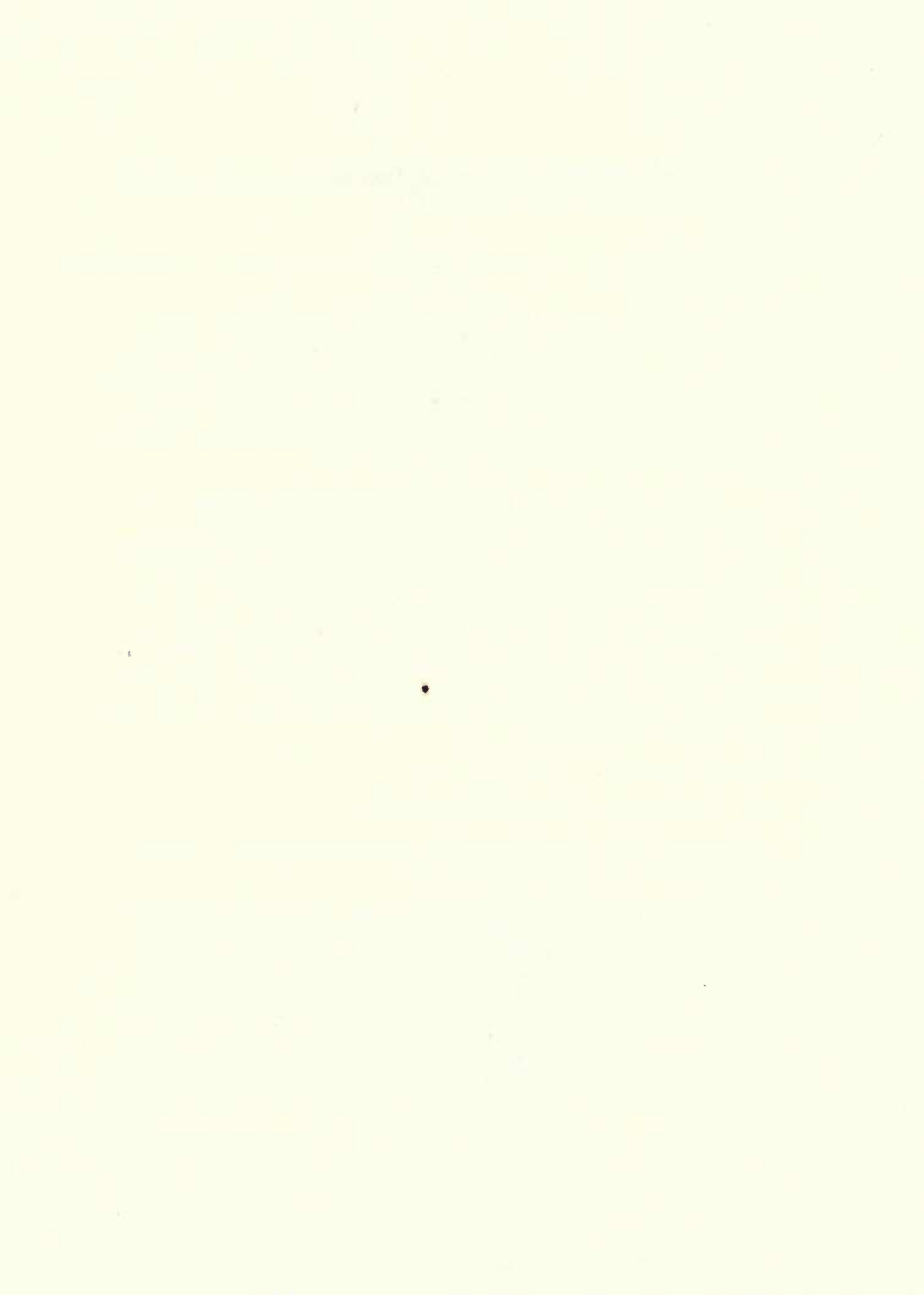
RL: In the bathroom?

Huff: Oh! [Laughter] I could only think so.

RL: How did you feel about going into library work where, I assume, you couldn't use your training?

Huff: I hadn't had very much training then. No, it was no skill for which I was especially prepared, but it didn't require a skill. I think the university subscribed in those times only to about 4,000 periodicals, and we simply made marks and had a visible file arrangement. Some of those were dailies, of course, but many of them were only quarterlies, annuals.

There were many languages, and I learned enough Russian to transcribe the titles and to read the dates and the volume and number and so on.



RL: Any journals in Far Eastern languages?

Huff: I don't think so. Well, I think they had things like the Journal Asiatique and the T'oung Pao, but none in Far Eastern languages.

They did have Russian. Professor Harper--I remember his name--a famous Russian scholar, came in every single morning of the weekdays to read Isvestia before he started his teaching duties.

RL: I'd just like to ask one or two more questions about your library work. You'd had no library training of a formal sort in courses, and, as you said, the work didn't require any training. But do you feel that you gained there experience that was subsequently useful to you in the East Asiatic Library, or was it simply a means of earning money?

Huff: [Pauses to think] I think the job was so plain that I really--I might have gained something from simply being in and using the university library, but I'd done that for four or five years at least in Urbana. The libraries were probably comparable. I suppose at the beginning one always learns something from being forced to be punctual, to work when you didn't feel like working, to stay until five o'clock, and I suppose I learned a certain amount of discipline from that, but I don't remember that it was tedious. I didn't fret about it. When I left the job in August, it was given to my sister, who had decided not to continue in college.

RL: You seem to have committed your time quite fully, but did you have any chance for social life? You mentioned a boyfriend earlier who became a Congregational minister. [Laughter] I wondered if he had any successors or if you had any good times with colleagues, students, friends?

Huff: Yes. Most of the people I knew in Chicago were older than I--a few years, really. [Pauses to think] I get it sort of mixed up, what I did when I was in Chicago. I never liked the city very much aside from the museums along Lake Shore Drive. After high school, I never played bridge. Lots of my friends played bridge. [Chuckle] I think I went occasionally to a dance. Those enormous barns in Chicago must have been crowded particularly in the Depression. One was called the Trianon and there was the Avalon. They were huge dancehalls where orchestras of the old days, good orchestras, played dance music. Paul Whiteman, for one. It was sort of fun.

RL: You weren't a movie buff?

Huff: No. I saw my first movie in Abingdon. I forgot to mention that. It was Charlie Chaplin in "Shoulder Arms," when I was six. It was lovely. What was the first talkie, as they called them? Well, one of the first was Janet Gaynor and that handsome hero, James Farrell, in "Seventh Heaven." I went to see that in a theater in the Loop--you know what the Loop is--and discovered, to my infinite joy, that the theater was air-conditioned. So, I used to go quite often on Saturday afternoons. [Laughter] It was over-air-conditioned, I think, probably in the beginning, but I loved it.

The International Chinese Exhibition, London, February, 1936

Huff: In February Catherine Schroeder lent me money--I must have been like a pouting child over the International Chinese Exhibition in London--to go to see it. I took a bus to New York and went steerage--it may not have been called steerage, but it was; third class, I believe--on a perfectly horrible ship called the S.S. United States. Oh! Another person in the same class was being deported, I think, to one of the southeastern European countries for bad behavior. [Laughter] I don't remember many of the people. There was an Irish girl who made a great and unfavorable impression upon me by saying I should wear a girdle. I never did and I never have. [Laughter] She burst into tears at the sight of Ireland. She was getting off in--where did those ships stop before they went on to Plymouth?--it was Cobh, in county Cork.

Well, the ship put in at Plymouth, and I all but burst into tears at seeing England, having read about it for so long. I hardly could go because the English consul in Chicago didn't think I had enough money. I had \$45, and I said, "Anyone can spend two weeks in London for \$45. I have that much for my stay." And then, of course, I sent to Urbana for my birth certificate, and there was none. [Laughter] I said earlier there is no official record, and there isn't; most unlike my father. I don't know what slipped then. Finally, I explained all that to Mother and she had a friend of hers, who had been a friend at the time of my birth and lived there, swear before a notary public that she had seen me born in that bedroom on Springfield Avenue. [Laughter] And so, finally, the consul relented and I went.

Huff: I took a train up to London. How I got to Tottenham Court Road I'm not quite sure. Well, I got there by some public transportation, but why I went there--I must have done some study to learn where inexpensive rooming houses would be, and I found one there. The other people were women, mostly secretaries and clerks. They were very nice. I really found them cordial. The people at the Exhibition I didn't; they seemed a little haughty always.

RL: I know that feeling! Was this at Burlington House?

Huff: Yes. So, every day for two weeks I went there, and I've never had two successive weeks of greater pleasure. It was a little crowded; I mean, the displays were somewhat crowded. I think the presentation of objects at exhibitions has come a long way since then--think of the Chinese exhibition last summer here.

But I carried home the two volumes of catalogue--the cheap edition, the paperbound one--one of text and one of pictures. I still consult it quite often. There was such a vast variety of objects. Many of the pictures, little dim black and white prints, [shows about two-inch square] will still bring back the vision of the piece itself.

RL: Were these from the Palace Collection?

Huff: Yes. And others--some European collections too, some from the Stoclet Collection in Brussels, and, of course, Eumorfoulous.

RL: Can you tell me what things there were there that you retain as part of your own personal treasure house, and what were new to you, things you hadn't seen before in America?

Huff: Well, of course, in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and in the Fogg Art Museum and at Alfred Salmony's exhibition, I had seen many fine Chinese objects of all periods--oh, also in the Art Institute of Chicago--paintings chiefly only at the Boston Museum. At the Exhibition in London, I think it was probably the ceramics that presented the largest amount of quite new, to me, forms. I think it was then that I started buying books on Chinese pottery when I could find them; there weren't many--Hetherington, Hobson. When I went finally to China, when I bought an object, it was usually pottery.

- Huff: There were some pieces from Tun-huang, of course--woodblock prints and paintings. One of the paintings was a mural from the Fogg Museum sent over. That kind of painting I hadn't seen before--the woodblock prints and the paintings on paper.
- RL: It's an extraordinary idea to me, spending two weeks going through an exhibit. How long could you spend looking before you reached the point of fatigue, of non-reception?
- Huff: Well, I was much younger then. [Laughter] I think I would look for about two hours, probably, and then go out and have lunch and then come back for another two hours or so. At night I used to make notes. It was cold in London; it was in February. One could have heat in the room only by dropping a shilling into a heater of some sort; I don't remember much what it was--gas, I suppose. It was the same thing with hot water. Geyser--was that what they called those hot water heaters?
- RL: Right. [Laughter] Frightening things.
- Huff: I was very reluctant to come home. I made bold to call upon W. Percival Yetts at the Courtauld Institute and to ask him if it would be possible for me to enroll in the University of London and study for a doctor's degree in Far Eastern art. He said that it would be only if I took an English master's degree first, that degrees earned at American colleges were not accepted as comparable to those earned in England.
- RL: How did the \$45 last?
- Huff: Perfectly. I was able to buy the catalogue; it was only a few shillings, I guess. I think I came home with five dollars or so.
- RL: Amazing!
- Huff: [Chuckle] I hope that I went to the British consul and congratulated him on the exhibition.

Learning Chinese with Herrlee Glessner Creel

Huff: I was in that position [in the library] for about twelve months, and again a great stroke of fortune. In early 1936, Herrlee Glessner Creel came from China, appointed as the first professor of Chinese at Chicago, and I pocketed my fears and went to call on him at his office in the Oriental Institute. Professor [Albert Ten Eyck] Olmstead had gone there by that time. The Near Eastern people, because, of course, Chicago was well rooted in Assyrian and Syrian studies, looked with tremendous scorn upon the intrusion of a Chinese scholar. [Laughter] And when it came to giving up stack space for Chinese books, they made no bones about their feelings.

RL: Did they give it up?

Huff: Yes. Later Creel's offices in the Oriental Institute library were moved to Harper Library. In my day, that's where they were. There was almost no [Chinese] library in my day, of course. He had brought some books from Peking.

RL: Was this something that was supported and urged by [Robert Maynard] Hutchins?

Huff: It must have been. He was president.

I went to call on Professor Creel in his office and asked if I might--I think I said--audit his course in Chinese. I should have known better. And he felt, as all professors do, especially at the beginning, that the more enrolled students he had, the better. So, I took the course. I paid the tuition; it wasn't very big. I studied then with him from--well, I went on working--March till August, when the summer quarter ended. He had five or six students. I don't remember any of them. It was an extraordinary six months.

You know the Hsiao ching, the classic of filial piety--one of the shorter classics, probably the shortest? It took us six months to read that in Chinese.

RL: Oh, you were studying Chinese with him?

Huff: Yes, this was a Chinese language course, beginning.

- RL: I see. I had thought him as more in philosophy and history.
- Huff: He went into that later, yes. He's a very flexible sort of person. I heard--I never knew whether or not it was a fact--that in earlier years he had written, under a pseudonym, detective stories.
- RL: Oh, really?
- Huff: Yes. He was very young when I took that course. He asked me my age and told me his, and I think there were three or four years between us. I think he was in his twenties, late twenties.
- RL: What had taken him into Chinese studies? Do you know?
- Huff: No, I really don't know. Like everyone, he adored Peking once he got there, but he must have begun studying before he ever went there. He spoke very good Chinese.
- RL: What sorts of aids did you have to your study of Chinese?
- Huff: No printed ones at that time. He prepared vocabularies for us, which, as I recall, were mimeographed. I studied very, very hard because the syllabus he prepared was more than just vocabulary. He would first give the character in its modern form, then the range of meanings it might have and different parts of speech, and then the seal character--and this I think was rather advanced study in 1936--as it appeared in bronzes and in bone inscriptions, and describe the original pictogram if it had an ancient one.
- RL: Did you speak as well?
- Huff: He tried to instruct us in correct pronunciation because his own was fluent; his speech was fluent. If I had a good start in that, and I don't recall, it certainly hasn't taken root.
- RL: [Laughter] It's something that people seem to find difficult to understand, how scholars can have a superb reading knowledge of Chinese and yet sometimes cannot speak at all.
- Huff: Yes. It's not so true of the younger ones. There's much more emphasis now on the spoken language. Of course, Yale is sort of a pioneer in that.

Granted the Kate Neal Kinley Memorial Traveling Fellowship:
to Radcliffe again

Huff: Well, while I was still working in the library, I came home one evening to discover--remembering your interest in the Depression I should mention that my dinners were approximately what my lunches had been at the World's Fair--hamburger, but with the addition of carrots. [Chuckle] Anyway, I came home one evening to discover a letter saying that I had been awarded the Kate Neal Kinley Memorial Fellowship at the University of Illinois; the Kate Neal Kinley Memorial Traveling Fellowship, it was called. It had been established a few years before by President David Kinley of the university in memory of his wife, who was--and Urbana was a rather unlikely place for it too--a great lover of the arts; I think primarily music, but also the graphic arts. And it was given every year. I think it was \$1,000; I'm not sure. It was given every year to a graduate of the university, not necessarily of the immediately preceding year, who wanted to do graduate work in one of the arts. And my having studied Chinese art--and at that time I was still intent upon becoming, if I could, a permanent student of Chinese painting--that background qualified me, I having studied under Langdon Warner and under Alfred Salmony.

So, with the greatest of joy, I applied to Radcliffe and was accepted again and went out in September.

RL: Had you applied for the fellowship, or were you recommended?

Huff: [Chuckle] I never asked. I never knew; I never asked. I can only guess.

RL: What do you guess?

Huff: President Kinley lived on Nevada Street, just one block south of our street. We often used to see him. I never knew him. But my mother, I'm afraid, would not have been averse to dropping a hint, and I imagine that's what happened.* I doubt very much that anybody

*Elizabeth Huff's sister, Virginia Hotchkin now, was in Urbana then and remembers that Mrs. Huff made inquiries of Dean Rexford Newcombs, who secured the fellowship for E.H.

Huff: at Illinois had followed my career after I left there. And I think there may have been an element of conscience in it, because my father, when he came back to Urbana in 1919, hadn't been very well treated. It had been kind of a poor business. That may have been part of it; I don't know. All that I've said is a guess.

RL: We're going to be talking about Radcliffe, and there was a question I should have asked last time. After you'd worked at the World's Fair and saved your money, you went to Radcliffe, and it sounded so simple. What were the application procedures then?

Huff: Well, they were simple compared to today's. The forms I had to fill in for admission to Alta Bates [hospital] were ten times worse than Radcliffe's. [Laughter] One simply wrote to the dean of the graduate school, as I recall, then Bernice Veasey Brown, stating in summary one's background and asking for an application form, and I filled one out and sent it in and was admitted. Of course, Radcliffe was much smaller in 1936 than it is now. The department was then called Far Eastern Languages. In the smaller departments such as that one, the women graduate students joined the men students in the Harvard Yard. I don't think I ever had a class at Radcliffe in the Radcliffe Yard. It simply didn't pay to bring the professors over for five or six students.

I never felt that any stigma attached to being a woman among superior men, and the Radcliffe staff was, I felt, quite dignified and made no apologies for the sex of its wards. [Chuckle]

RL: If you hadn't needed the fellowship, where do you think you could have got the best education in Chinese in America at that time?

Huff: [Pauses to think] Herrlee Creel would have said Chicago. Possibly Yale. George Kennedy was there then. I met him years later when he was far into drink.

Graduate Studies in Chinese, Japanese, and Art

RL: Did you live in a dormitory?

Huff: Not the first year. I took a room with two maiden sisters on Garden Street. I had a room, breakfast and dinner, all for \$27.50 a month, and very good food it was. The Searle sisters were interesting. I think they were both in their sixties, perhaps. Lucy, the elder, was feverishly learning Hebrew. It had been the great desire of hers all of her life to be able to read Hebrew. Katharine, her younger sister, was very active in the Shakespeare theatre in Sandwich. They were very interesting, both well read.

There were five or six boarders, the others retired ladies. We had great arguments. Mrs. Potter, the widow of a dentist who, I think, had done some remarkable pioneering work in or after the First World War on the reconstruction of damaged jaws and teeth--Mrs. Potter was one of those ladies--you probably noted them when you were in Cambridge. They were somewhat scorned, the elderly ladies who spent their lives going to Harvard lectures, and Mrs. Potter was one of those. So, naturally, she was omniscient, and I was only a mean student. I remember once she tried to persuade me quite solemnly, that the Aztecs were not a cruel people.
[Laughter]

Another was Mrs. Bratton, who had been living in Paris, as so many Americans had been in the thirties and twenties, and was no longer able to support herself; her income wouldn't support her there, so she had come back to Cambridge. She tried to persuade me--another failure there--to become a Christian Scientist, because she had lost a button from her coat on a bus and doing whatever Christian Scientists do, she had been led back to the same bus where, lo, there was the button. [Laughter]

RL: Well, I guess you find them all over.

Huff: Oh, yes. Well, I don't think Cambridge has a corner on them.

When I went to Boylston Hall--the Far Eastern Languages department--I was directed to James R. Ware as adviser, because he was the professor of Chinese at that time. If reports were correct, before he undertook Chinese, which he studied, I think, mostly in Paris, he had been a teacher of Latin in a high school in the Northwest--Portland

Huff: or Seattle--and that probably accounted for some of his classroom mannerisms.

RL: Such as?

Huff: Well, there was one famous incident. We were reading in the Tso chuan, a classic historical text, and came to a passage which one of the students translated correctly, and Mr. Ware became very angry and said, "That means that he died." The student said quite correctly, "But on the next page he's living," at which Ware blushed the color of an apple and said, "We are here to translate the Chinese into English. We are not here to ask if the Chinese makes sense." [Laughter]

Another time we were reading a passage from Shih-chi about Ch'in Shih Huang-ti, after becoming the first Emperor, going back to his home town, and he was so moved by the village that he wept copiously. One of the students translated the passage that way, which was precisely what it meant. Mr. Ware again was angry and said, "Translate what it says," and the student smiled to the group [chuckle] and said, "He wept many rows down." And Mr. Ware said, "That's right."

RL: Gracious! [Laughter]

Huff: Well, I am a little ahead of the story. I was directed to him. He asked what I knew. I came from Chicago where Herrlee Creel had advised me to go to Harvard because that's where the fellowship money was. He said, "Well, all right, I'll sign you up for Chinese II." And I said, "Look, Mr. Ware, I've had no modern Chinese. I can't read modern Chinese--pai-hua." He said, "Well, if you can't make it, you can't make it," and so there I was. Sometimes I had to learn seventy new characters in one night! [Laughter] It was rough.

RL: What other courses did you take that year?

Huff: Japanese language and a course in Chinese philosophy by Ware. The Japanese was taught by--I think he had done his first name into French--Serge (it would have been Sergei) Elisséeff.

RL: Oh, yes.

Huff: You know, when he went to Tokyo, he was eighteen or nineteen. He started in the first grade of Japanese schools and went right through.

RL: At eighteen?

Huff: It took him two or three years to go through the university again, but every grade.

So, we learned Japanese by buying a set--I think there were twelve books, small paperbound books--of the primers and readers that the Japanese used in the Korean schools from first grade on.

RL: How did you find the library facilities at Harvard when you were a student, in terms of your needs then and in retrospect?

Huff: It was certainly adequate for my needs then. In terms of the reading we were assigned, the little bit of so-called research that we could do, it was certainly adequate. A[lfred] K[aiming] Chiu was there as librarian first. He's retired from there now, but he's still active in Hong Kong, I think. He was most helpful. The stacks were not open. Only graduate students were allowed in them, and the system was that you approached the door that led into them and that a blond chap at the desk, Mr. Winship, would press the button which released the lock. It was Mr. Winship, who, when, after the war, Bernard Karlgren came to visit, opened the library for him and the other dignitaries at ten o'clock on a Saturday morning, and it was to the astonishment of the professors and no doubt of Mr. Karlgren too to see that Mr. Winship had donned a tuxedo for the occasion. [Laughter]

RL: Oh, that's a real Harvard story! Almost unbelievable.

Huff: Yes.

RL: Was Harvard-Yenching then the best library in Far Eastern materials in America at the time?

Huff: I don't know how it compared with Columbia at that time. It may have been better. Of course, one doesn't compare any of the university collections with the Library of Congress.

Summer of 1937 in Munich

Huff: Well, there had been a notable flaw--one of the notable flaws--in my education; I had never studied German. My father had taught me a bit when I was a child. But it was required that before one took the prelims one must, of course, pass French and German reading tests, and I had hardly a word of German. So, I spent the summer of '37 in Munich. It must have been a Radcliffe fellowship, but I can't recall and I find no evidence in my papers. Certainly I must have had a fellowship of some sort.

So, I went to Munich, studied at the university there, attended many lectures, and also had a tutor. I learned enough in a little under three months, I think, to pass the exams when the time came to take them.

RL: How rigorous were they? Were you allowed to bring in a dictionary, for example?

Huff: No. I shouldn't say that I passed the German when it came up. I took it along with students from various departments at Harvard, and it was a very knotty passage about military maneuvers and strategy, and I didn't pass that one; I had to take it a second time.

RL: In other words, not only no dictionary, but no required text?

Huff: That's it--you had no idea. I had assumed, in my innocence, that I'd be given a text in the Oriental field, and I had crammed by reading things like Forke's History of Chinese Philosophy and Franke's History of China, but--[chuckle].

RL: Munich in 1937. How did the Nazi regime affect your attitude and the whole atmosphere?

Huff: Oh, quite a great deal. It was, of course, saddening to a degree. The couple that I came to know best there, by chance, were--let me be sure I have the succession of titles correct--Herr Geheimrat Dr. Karl Neumeyer, yes, and his wife. They were the parents of Alfred Neumeyer, who later became professor of art at Mills. They were lovely people, living very quietly, of course.

There were already signs at the entrances to parks: "Die Juden sind unser Unglück." Of course, Dr. Neumeyer no longer had a position. They lived in a small apartment. Friends of

Huff: theirs would come in. We spoke in German. They didn't speak English, or didn't dare to. I shouldn't have dared to speak German [chuckle], but I liked them, so I did.

The other outstanding aspect of that dreadful period was for me the famous Tag der Deutschen Kunst in Munich. It seems to me it was August. It was a tremendous parade showing the historical development from almost antediluvian times of the presumed Aryan race.

RL: Was this a parade?

Huff: Of floats. Tremendously long. And I have never before nor since been in such a crowd, or such a pushing crowd. I fainted, but it was so tightly packed that I couldn't fall to the ground, and luckily a housewife standing near me drew out a bottle of smelling salts and revived me. [Chuckle]

RL: Was it very frightening?

Huff: I found it so. The parade itself wasn't, on the surface, essentially militaristic. But the feeling that I had, at any rate, was that there was a tremendous and evil power pushing the thing, and it went all through German history.

RL: What was the crowd's response to this?

Huff: Silence. It was the largest and most silent crowd. I don't remember hearing any cheers. I may have heard suppressed gasps; I'm not sure now.

RL: Was it impressive or seductive in its way?

Huff: It might have been to a Nazi. I didn't find it so. It was very gaudy. I think a considerable amount of money had been spent on those floats. Over-lifesized figures. Chariots.

At the same time, but lasting, of course, more than a day--lasting, I suppose, for several weeks--was an art exhibition called "Entartete Kunst." "Degenerate Art," I guess, isn't it?

RL: What was that?

Huff: That was paintings of some of the greatest artists, most of them living, I think, at that time, all of them being held up to scorn.

Huff: I'm sorry there wasn't a catalogue; I'd love to have had one. The paintings I admired most were those of Kandinski, who I'm sure was already out of the country. He was Russian, of course, but had lived in Germany. And that, strangely enough, at least in the two or three times that I visited it, didn't draw many visitors.

RL: How was the message of the "degeneracy" of the art conveyed?

Huff: I think they showed at the same time examples of "true" German art. You know how dreadful German oil painting can be at its worst [chuckle], and I think it was--very homespun art work. I suppose someone there in the cultural offices thought that by showing quite impressionistic works--they seem to have selected the most abstract paintings they could find--they would appeal in '37 to the fewest number of people, and by writing labels that almost sneered at the artists, I suppose they thought there was some advantage to themselves in that, but I don't know. I don't know how one stirs up feelings such as Hitler was able to do in some people by such means, but I suppose it's a proven psychological form of the worst kind of nationalism.

RL: Were the disapproved, the "degenerate," artists all German either by origin or by residence?

Huff: I think so. I think I'd have remembered if there'd been people like Picasso, and there weren't.

RL: That's very interesting. I wonder why people stayed away. Do you think it was risky to go?

Huff: Perhaps. Are the Germans great art museum goers? I don't know. I went quite often to what I thought was one of the most charming of the museums in Germany--the Folk Art Museum in Munich. I remember also the Glyptothek and the Ältere Pinakothek and the historical museum of the city. And I was sometimes the only person in the galleries, but then that may be true in this country if you go at unpopular hours.

RL: One question that comes up again and again: Why were the Neumeyers still in Germany?

Huff: I don't know, and an American friend of mine who'd introduced me to them when she was passing through Munich told me years later that their son, Alfred Neumeyer, never knew what became of them.

Huff: Whether they were unable to leave, hadn't the money to leave, or were detained, I don't know. I have purposely never read the books about that period any more than I should read Solzhenitzyn's Gulag Archipelago. There's enough sorrow in life.

RL: Do you think that your own [Japanese internment] camp experience has made it an area that you do not care to revisit?

Huff: Quite possibly, though there wasn't torture in Wei-hsien. There was plenty of discomfort, and I have always been, perhaps I should say cowardly, about contemplating, seeing, or reading of cruelty to people or to animals. I don't feel that it would advance my understanding of the world. I can imagine enough horror.

So, at the end of the summer I went to Paris, which I hadn't seen before, and spent about two weeks there, mostly in the Louvre and other museums, and the Bibliothèque Nationale, which had and still has a great collection of Chinese things.

RL: Did you meet any of the great Sinologues?

Huff: No. The chap who guided me in the library must have been a guide of some sort. [Laughter] I don't know who he was. He didn't ask my name and I didn't ask his.

At the Musée Guimet, which I visited more than once in those two weeks because of its remarkable Chinese and Indo-Chinese collection, I met and saw later, many years later, in Berkeley, and she stayed with me in Berkeley, Antoinette Hauchecorne. I think she's still in Paris, still active in the museum.

Friends and Colleagues

RL: Which friends and colleagues do you recall from those graduate student days?

Huff: I did meet--well, he was a sort of a boyfriend; he wasn't a teacher--Albert Gardner, who was studying under Langdon Warner and has been for many, many years now at the Met[ropolitan Museum],, where he's written very good books about American art.

Huff: I met Charles Sidney Gardner, who was always kind to me through those years. You know that Harvard had cut him off. Luckily, he was independently wealthy.

RL: No, I didn't know that.

Huff: Well, he published his book called Chinese Historiography, which is an excellent book, but he insisted upon using the romanization scheme of his own device, so they wouldn't employ him after he received his degree--"d" for "t" and so on. I think he probably hadn't a very good ear, though I can't say that I think Thomas Wade and Herbert A. Giles did, in the system that we use.

In my class, Chinese II, III, and IV, were two people with whom I became quite friendly, and we used to sit on the back porch of the dormitory on Sundays and study together. One was Fannie Chude, who, I may have mentioned, later became professor of Latin at Tufts University, a good New Englander from Maine, a charming person. The other was Theodore White, who wrote The Making of the President. He studied Chinese relatively early. He was remarkable, absolutely brilliant. His father had brought the family to this country when Ted was a boy, and his father, not wanting his name to jeopardize the children, walked up the streets of Boston and saw a storefront, White & Company or something like that, and said, "That's a good American name."

RL: Where were they from?

Huff: I never asked Ted what country. They were a Jewish family. And he, Ted, made his way through Harvard and probably through his doctor's--he was still at Harvard when I was. He was with Time, Inc. by the time I returned. [1946] He worked his way through Harvard by teaching Hebrew to the sons of wealthy Jewish people in Boston and around about. He was very good in Chinese. He had a real instinct for it.

RL: Was he still Jewish in commitment at that point?

Huff: I don't know. I don't know. It sort of wasn't done, it seemed to me, out there to mention either politics or religion [chuckle], though some of the more forward girls in the dormitory were pretty far into what I suppose one should call socialism. I never took much part in it, not because I didn't think it was interesting and important, but I knew so little and I wasn't willing to spend time reading.

Huff: Who was the famous chap who died in Russia quite young, who had written a book about the Russian revolution? John--? Well, anyway, his book was the Bible for many people. Ten Days that Shook the World by John Reed.

RL: That sounds right.

Huff: I got to know Eleanor von Erdberg, who was then working in the Rubel Asiatic Research Bureau, which was housed in the Fogg Museum. Later Eleanor went to Japan before I did and I met her in Peking when I went there. She had married--we never knew his first name--he liked to be called Herr Consten. [Laughter] I think they returned to Germany after the war, and she became a professor at the Technische Hochschule in Aachen. I think she is still there. After Herr Consten's death, she married a cousin also named von Erdberg who, last I knew, was living in upper New York state.

RL: What was the function of the Rubel Asiatic Research Bureau?

Huff: To support research in Oriental art. It was chiefly notable at that time for its magnificent and magnificently mounted photographs of Chinese and Japanese art from collections all over the world. It was a marvelous place to study.

RL: Is it still in existence?

Huff: I think so. It was last time I was in Cambridge, yes. I doubt that Mr. Rubel is still living. I remember him; I often met him there.

I don't remember exactly when I met people like John and Wilma Fairbank, Edwin Reischauer and his wife.

RL: Did you take John's course, "Rice Paddies?" Was that being taught then?

Huff: [Laughter] I don't remember it. I certainly should have taken it! No, I never studied with him.

RL: And what about students in other departments associated with the Far East?

Huff: Really, I suppose the only ones I knew were those who had rooms in the same dorm. Helen Zimmerman, the daughter of the Kansas

Huff: banker, was coming up for her prelims in Japanese history. Oh, she was a woman. As her prelims approached, she would come knock on my door, come into my room--I remember once it was three in the morning--and ask me to go over notes with her to prepare her. And then I had to go with her to Longfellow Hall-- I have a feeling her exams were held there--and wait. It seemed to me they were going on excessively far into the day, and finally she came out and waited to be given the word, and then she and I together sat there, she trembling head to toe. Finally Mr. Elisséeff came out and said she had passed. Then we went to a cocktail party that John Fairbank gave for her in his beautiful house, and he drew me aside and said that since I was a friend of Helen's (I was never really close to Helen and I didn't know who her best friends were) would I please make it quite clear to her that she had barely scraped through and that she had better knuckle down and study harder. Then she went to Japan and married Vincent Canzoneri, a musician who was there studying Japanese music, and that was the end of Helen's study.

RL: Were there any students who had come into the field with missionary backgrounds?

Huff: Oh, yes, though I can't think of any at Harvard. John Pope was there--art specialist, I suppose, scholar for sure--and Schuyler Cammann.

RL: He was a marvelous man.

Huff: [Chuckle] My goodness, how he disliked Langdon Warner!

RL: Really?

Huff: Oh! Langdon wrote a book on Wan-Fo Ssu, one of the cave temples in northwestern China, and he wrote in the preface or introduction that as he and his group of outsiders had trekked through to that site, some of the poor villagers and people along the way were not friendly. They'd never seen anyone like it--Langdon had sort of red hair and a red moustache. I have forgotten the words he used-- I have the book upstairs--but he implicitly defended himself for raising his riding crop and threatening. That was more than Schuyler could take. [Laughter] Well, I tend to be on Schuyler's side.

RL: Would somebody like Langdon Warner at that time have felt free to take or buy things that we would now regard as inadmissible to be removed from the country? How much of the "buy it or take it to save it" attitude was still current?

Huff: That's how he defended his taking things from Tun-huang; the natives didn't care. Well, the peasants around there at that time of course didn't care. Pelliot, around the turn of the century had made off with much, and so had Sir Aurel Stein, things that are now in the British Museum.

RL: We're now talking about the 1930s, are we not, Langdon Warner?

Huff: He was there, yes. It seems to me it was early '30s when he made that trip. But so far as I know, the most noble piece of ceramic sculpture, a kneeling figure perhaps two-and-a-half or three feet high, to have been brought out of China is that figure in the Fogg Museum. It's most beautiful. He also cut two, I think, fresco paintings out of the plaster walls, and those were shown in the International Exhibition in Burlington House.

RL: How do you feel about that, at that period when China was in such turmoil?

Huff: Well, the Palace Museum at that time was still in good order. It was before they had removed so much, before the Japanese took Peking. My inclination would have been to have gone back and made a full report of the conditions. I think that might have inspired the officials to send people up country.

The Chinese, after the war, began making a great thing of Tun-huang. Many, many books have been published and are still being, I think. And, of course, Irene Vincent and her husband were allowed to go in and take those lovely colored photographs.

RL: So, in conclusion, do you think that by the 1930s, it was inadmissible to remove objects?

Huff: Yes. I think it was undiplomatic and indefensible, really. Of course, Langdon would counter: "When I reached Peking and went on to the ship in Tientsin, why didn't they stop me?" I don't know that he ever handed bribes to people.

"Women's Inferiority" and Political Discussions

- Huff: When I came back to Cambridge in the fall of 1937, I was given a room in the one graduate dorm at that time, I think, a dormitory on Shepard Street, near the [Radcliffe] Yard. Someone who became a friend of mine there was Jane Aiken, the daughter of Conrad Aiken, taking her Master's in English literature. She later married Alan Hodge, the editor of History Today, and they have now two daughters, unless the two daughters are now grown and away, and live in Wimbledon. I visited in Kingston some years ago and didn't know until I returned that Jane was just next door in Wimbledon.
- RL: What a shame.
- Huff: Yes, it was. She's written a number of books, historical novels, and I think they've sold quite a lot. I haven't read them.
- You may strike this if you wish. One of the clearest things I remember about Jane was--[Interruption by front doorbell]
- RL: You were mentioning Jane Aiken.
- Huff: Yes. My most vivid memory of her is when she and I were in a group in the dormitory one evening--all of us lived there--and someone suggested that women were not inferior to men. That started off a tremendous row, of course, and Jane and I stood up stoutly for the side that men were superior, not because they were generally more intelligent, which neither of us believed, but because generally speaking they tended to speak and act more from reason and less from emotion. I still feel that way. I don't know whether Jane does. [Laughter]
- RL: And the opposite side?
- Huff: I think was the majority. Radcliffe, of course. Men were in no way superior to women. [Laughter]
- RL: And you still hold to this view?
- Huff: I do, yes. My experience in life pointed that out quite clearly. If one of the staff members became unduly agitated about, for example, another staff member or an error discovered in the catalogue,

Huff: on the whole the men took it quite calmly, and on the whole the women didn't. Of course, there were exceptions.

RL: Do you feel that you yourself follow emotion rather than reason?

Huff: I can't say. All I can say is that for many years I've consciously tried not to [follow emotion] which stood me in good stead in the library because I had a mixed staff, not only mixed races, but, of course, both men and women.

RL: I would have thought you were a living example that your opinion in this Radcliffe discussion was erroneous!

Huff: [Laughter] Well, that's kind of you.

RL: Were there political discussions at this period?

Huff: Yes. Well, there was a lot of discussion, and distinguished lecturers were brought into the dormitory on Sunday evenings to speak to us about social justice, socialism, sometimes Communism, just factual. There were a certain number of girls who were wealthy Republican conservatives [laughter], and they took no part, of course, in this sort of thing.

RL: They did not attend the lectures?

Huff: They attended the lectures; they took no part in the discussions. I remember one lecture. Well, it was a poet reading, and I've been unable to recall which poet it was, an American poet. He read from his works, and the poems were loaded with references to the autocracy of the industrial rich. I remember that Louise Shoup, who was the daughter of the president of the Southern Pacific Railroad, vice-president of the Southern Pacific Corporation after that, and at that time, I think, had a high position with American Factors--in any case, his daughter was sitting next to me, and she sat growling the whole time at the poet's implications and statements. [Laughter]

RL: Would you say that the dominant mode of thinking amongst those Radcliffe graduates who attended was democratic, was towards the left?

Huff: Yes. I think it was certainly, on the whole, liberal and democratic. And there was one girl there who, despite the fact that she was the daughter of a mill owner and banker who'd made a tremendous fortune in Kansas, she was reasonable for a girl! [Laughter]

Huff: One other thing I remember, in '37, Shanghai fell to the Japanese, and when the headlines appeared at Harvard Square, there was a great uproar among the students, of course. Fannie Chude, a few days later, went, probably to Filene's in Boston, to buy a hooked rug, selected one, and when she saw it was made in Japan, threw it on the floor, stomped upon it, and berated the clerk. [Laughter]

But the great story to come out of that period was about Mary Wright, and you may have heard that. [She was] Mary Claybaugh then, at Vassar. She took part in and, I daresay, led a mass demonstration on the Vassar campus where all the students burned all their silk hose, their silk stockings. [Laughter]

RL: Really?

Huff: Yes. Because all the silk was coming from Japan.

RL: When did Mary come to Harvard? Did she overlap with you before the war?

Huff: No. She may have come in '39. She and Arthur [Wright]--I don't know when they were married, really, but they were married by the time they went to Kyoto in '40, and then I met her when they came the following year to Peking.

The Harvard Chinese Dictionary Project

RL: When did you take your prelims?

Huff: Not until the spring of '39. In the summer of '38, which I think we've reached now, I started work in Cambridge on the Chinese-English Dictionary Project.

RL: Could you describe that somewhat, because that was such an enormous thing and many people in the field simply don't know about it.

Huff: Oh, I see. The relationship between Harvard and Yenching University outside Peking was close, of course. Edward Hall had left his fortune, or much of it, to establish an institute which would have bases in the United States and in China, and Yenching was hit upon. I don't know why. It may be because it was a

Huff: Christian university, and I remember hearing Mr. Elisséeff mutter in deploring that there were Christians and missionaries on the board of trustees. [Chuckle]

But sometime before '38, and possibly as much as two or three years before, a staff of young Chinese was set up at Yenching with two copies each of several Chinese and Japanese dictionaries, including even the P'ei-wen yün-fu [7 volumes], that blue set up there on my shelves. They pasted each single entry-- and cut up two copies of each dictionary because you couldn't use both sides of one page obviously--on 5 x 8 cards. The cost of those cards alone I can't imagine. They had been sent from the States out to China.

Then a room off of the reading room in Boylston Hall [Cambridge] was lined with steel filing cabinets built to accommodate that sized card, and as the cards were shipped back they were put there, and I was hired to spend the summer, at thirty-five cents an hour, to take out the cards one by one and romanize above the entry, give the Wade-Giles standard romanization for the main entry--one character, two characters. It was rather boring work, but I was delighted to have a job because my sister was to be married in August and I needed to save money to buy her a wedding present [laughter], and I was able to do so.

I don't remember now how far I got; I think through the C's, probably, which means A's and C's. Of course, Wade-Giles had no B's.

RL: What was the purpose of the project?

Huff: The purpose was then to compile a Chinese-English dictionary, which would hold all that the Chinese-Chinese and Chinese-Japanese dictionaries held, and open up heaven to future students, you see.

RL: How were the Chinese and Japanese cards filed? What classification did they use? The radical?

Huff: When I took over? I think someone had put them in roughly phonetic order. It seems to me that the A's were all in the first file drawer.

RL: And jumping ahead somewhat, what happened to the Dictionary Project?

Huff: I heard nothing of it for some years after that, of course, till I came back. In 1946, there was a Russian gentleman--I don't think I'll be able to recall his name. I remember he ate oranges all the time in the office. He was working on it; exactly what his duties were, I don't know. But in '47, Achilles Fang went to Harvard and he was put to work with this Russian gentleman to make a study of one character which would set the style, so to speak, for the whole dictionary. I don't remember what year that was completed. They chose the character tzu, 子, the 39th Radical so called. That means "seed," "boy," "master," and so on.

In any case, probably in '49 or '50, the institute published the study--I've forgotten whether it was published as a pamphlet or was published in the Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies; it could have been either. It was very poorly received. It was scholarly to a fault, I imagine. I don't remember it clearly and I don't have a copy of it. It was probably plodding and probably rather awkwardly written. But it was given so little notice that it would have been folly, I suppose, to carry on.

Now, by that time, while Mr. Elisséeff was still director of the institute, Edwin Reischauer was really powerful there, and I imagine that he was instrumental in wiping the slate clean and ending the whole thing. I never knew; I never asked him about it.

RL: Professor Y.R. Chao was associated with that project at one point.*

Huff: It was when I was out of the country, I think. He would have been a reasonable person to be, yes.

RL: What do you perceive as the fundamental problems in the conception of this? After all, looking at it from the outside, a really scholarly Chinese-English dictionary would have been an enormous resource for scholars and students.

Huff: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Well, the problems, I think, are inherent in the Chinese language. That is, when I say that, I mean the classical language. I spent all day yesterday on a problem of this nature. The range of meanings demonstrably given to a certain

*See Yuen Ren Chao, "Chinese Linguist, Phonologist, Composer, and Author," transcript of a tape-recorded interview conducted by Rosemary Levenson, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, 1977.

Huff: character may be vast, from our point of view, although English is not without ambiguity [chuckle], and yesterday I had, I think, four unassailable sources for the use of a certain two-character phrase. Among the four, there were three different interpretations, and quite different: "a large stone," "a pile of stones," "versatile." [Chuckle] That's a simple example. That's easy compared to what the compilers of such a Chinese-English dictionary would have encountered.

One possible way out would be to list the different interpretations without comment, you see--"Yen Shih-ku says..." But think of how the book would fill this room! [Chuckle]

RL: One comment I heard was that a basic flaw in the conception was that secondary sources were used; that is to say, dictionaries that had already been compiled.

Huff: In Western languages?

RL: No, in Chinese, rather than going to the original texts.

Huff: Oh, I see. Well, I can't believe that anybody like Achilles Fang would not [go to original sources.] The secondary sources--the Tz'u hai, for example, a little two-volume dictionary, is a secondary source, but it cites its sources, and I can't believe that a person like Achilles Fang would not have the best editions of those sources at hand.

RL: Would a reasonable conclusion be that the task was impossible?

Huff: [Pauses to think] It was impossible of being brought to anything like a nearly perfect state, I think. Had it been carried out, I'm certain there would have been parts of it that would have been invaluable, especially to the student in his first or second year. But I think the original aim was higher; I think they thought it would allow even scholars to bypass the other dictionaries, standard dictionaries.

RL: Why do you think the project was undertaken?

Huff: I think it probable [chuckle] that two of the less desirable characteristics of human nature were involved: a desire to put the name of oneself or one's institution up front, and the temptation to make good use of what, in those days, was a tremendous amount of money. [Telephone interruption]

RL: Have you any idea how much money was involved?

Huff: [Pauses to think] I'm quite certain that the word went around among students, only they're not [chuckle] always reliable, that it was at least tens of thousands. That's all I ever heard, and, of course it was never published.

RL: Do you have any idea what happened to those materials?

Huff: No. The last time I saw them, the filing cabinets were still there. They had been moved into a much larger room on the second floor of Boylston, but, of course, the institute left Boylston Hall years ago. I'll try to remember to ask next week. Somebody there will know, I think.

RL: It's always struck me as a tragic example of a waste of time, money, and talent.

Huff: A waste of money is tragic wherever it comes in academic places or in others.

When I came back from China in '46--I was starting to say it took me weeks to recover from what I never have recovered from-- I had left still in the Depression, really, and I'd lived in countries where there wasn't such waste and where there was a good deal of suffering and malnutrition, and the sight when I came back of the waste, not only in restaurants, which is bad enough, but in every middle class home, the waste of food. I never have recovered from it, really. I just can't understand it.

Harvard-Yenching Institute Fellowship

Huff: I think that rounds off the first full year at Radcliffe, but for the fact that in the spring [1937], I was walking toward Harvard Yard one day when Langdon Warner hailed me--he was one of the trustees of the Harvard-Yenching Institute--and told me that I'd be awarded an Institute Fellowship. I couldn't credit it; women weren't given them. [Laughter] But, as it turned out, I was awarded one.

RL: And what did that signify? How many years of support?

Huff: Usually, and this would have been the same, I believe, if the war hadn't come along, the students, after passing the prelims, were sent for one or two years to Paris, and two to three in the Far East, one in Japan and two in China, or the other way around, depending upon the student's specialty.

RL: How did you feel about that?

Huff: Oh! [Chuckle] I was overcome. I couldn't believe that I had such good fortune. I was very happy.

Requirements for the Ph.D. in Far Eastern Languages

RL: What were the language requirements then for a Ph.D. in Far Eastern languages from Harvard?

Huff: Simply reading knowledge of French and German, and having passed a reading test in the second one of your two Far Eastern languages, in my case Japanese. I passed the reading test in that and the reading tests in French and German. That was all.

RL: And your Chinese was expected, as I understand it, to be of a high literary quality. Was spoken Chinese tested?

Huff: Never! [Laughter]

RL: And the other requirements?

Huff: You were to come up for prelims--I suppose this was true for every student; it was for me--near the completion of your fourth year of the major language, depending on which you were studying.

RL: And what areas were covered by the prelims?

Huff: It was rather general. My field at that time was going to be Chinese painting, but prelims covered history, literature, art, basic Chinese philosophy; they were quite general, quite lengthy. I think I was let go after a little less than three hours. [Chuckle] Some people were kept longer.

RL: At the end of the prelims, had you completed the requirements for the Ph.D. with the exception of the thesis?

Huff: Yes. The thesis and an oral defense of it at the end.

Preliminary Oral Examination, Harvard-Radcliffe Style

RL: Well, your studies were progressing, obviously.

Huff: Yes. I returned to Cambridge in the same dormitory room in September of '38. I had finished with the dictionary in late August to go to Urbana for my sister's wedding. Then I returned to Cambridge in the same dormitory room and enrolled for Chinese IV and Japanese III. I don't remember; maybe I took French and German reading exams the year before and then, in early spring, I took the Japanese reading exam, which, fortunately, was in the field of Chinese painting. Then, in May--in late May, probably-- I took the oral examinations. I remember the evening before them more clearly than I do the exams themselves. Professor Ware-- [laughter]

RL: Why do you laugh?

Huff: Professor Ware invited me to his house after dinner with a few friends of mine. I can't remember who all was there. I drank very little. I had learned to drink highballs when I was at Radcliffe, but I drank very little, and certainly in times of stress [laughter], I eschewed the wine, the bottle.

Mr. Ware had equipped himself with a fifth of Scotch and, assuring me and my friends that there was no worse preparation for oral examinations than tension, poured drink after drink, and he was insistent that the drinks be swallowed. I always thought that it was awfully unkind of him, but I got through the exams all right. [Laughter]

RL: And had you already determined your thesis subject?

Huff: It was to be on Chinese painting, and Mr. Elisséeff suggested to me the Yüan dynasty [1280-1368] painter Ni Tsan, who is a most, most delightful painter. Mr. Elisséeff suggested it, I think, because it was his opinion, and it was probably correct, that in Japan more than in any other place one could see a number of originals of the landscape paintings.

III TO THE ORIENT: JAPAN AND INDOCHINA, 1939-1940

Japan via the San Francisco Exposition

RL: I gathered from the conversation that we had earlier that your normal course of studies after the prelims would have been to have gone to Paris under the terms of your fellowship. How much were you aware of the international situation in 1939?

Huff: More aware of the uncertainties in Europe, I think, than of those in the Far East, until I reached Japan. And then I didn't really become aware of the situation until the United States embassies and consulates started sending out less and less mild advice to go home.

Yes. So, the summer of '39 I spent at home preparing clothing and things, and having, for no reason whatever except that my mother had a deep distrust of the advancement of Oriental civilization [laughter], my wisdom teeth removed, a most painful process without benefit of anesthetic.

RL: Good gracious!

Huff: Why, local, I'm sure. But it [the extraction] was quite unnecessary.

Mrs. Paul Shoup had invited me to visit in the family home in Los Altos for two weeks, and so I left Urbana probably in early August and came out by train. It was a much easier trip than the earlier one had been. I think I had to change trains only in Denver.

In Denver, a friend of mine who lived there, whom I had known well at Radcliffe, Frances Ehret--Frances Hodnette at that time--she had been studying Tibetan and Sanskrit under Walter Clark when

Huff: I was studying Chinese, and she later took her degree in Tibetan and assisted him until the time of her death. She joined me in Denver and we came together to San Francisco. I've forgotten who met my train there. And then I went down to Los Altos, a charming place, although not so splendid as Charles Erskine Scott Wood's.

Shall I mention what little I remember of the San Francisco Exposition?

RL: Please.

Huff: While I was staying with the Shoups, I went several times there. It was then that I met Catherine Harroun.* Langdon Warner--I have his title correctly here--was director of the Division of Pacific Cultures in the Department of Fine Arts, and I went over there [to Treasure Island] and saw him often.

I asked Catherine Harroun if she remembered the evening that she and Louise Shoup and I came out from having had dinner there, and Catherine cast off her shoes, jumped over a low fence, and danced [laughter] on the beautiful lawn. She said she remembered it clearly, and she told me what I hadn't known before, that for years she had been studying interpretive dancing with Ann Hundstock, who, with her husband James, had come from Hamburg to Berkeley in the '20s and had in the '30s a studio in San Francisco. So, that's why she was emboldened--she danced most gracefully. [Laughter]

RL: What a wonderful picture. Where was this?

Huff: It was outside one of the pavilions at the Fair, and I can't remember which. We had eaten nearby.

RL: What was the Fair like?

Huff: It seemed to me smaller than the '33 Fair had been in Chicago, but rather nicer, rather better contained, and a bit more dignified. It lacked some amenities that were to be found in Chicago, such as the minute Frenchman who stood beside his cart and shouted repeatedly, "Pâtisserie Parisienne--five cents, five cents!" The art exhibitions I liked better because in Chicago, while they were, I think, good ones, there hadn't been anything of the Far East. And Langdon [Warner] had a marvelous show here. I shouldn't speak of him without his last name, but that can be added.

*Interviewer, editor, Regional Oral History Office.

Huff: The [S.S.] Hiei Maru sailed from Seattle in late August. It was on that ship--it shouldn't be dignified by that name--that I met George Kerr, the historian of Formosa and Okinawa and so on. He had been home for the summer and was returning to his teaching job at what was then Taihoku University, one of the Japanese imperial universities, in Taipei. I don't remember other persons on the ship except a small, most fearsome group of Assembly of God missionaries, or is it Assemblies of God? I believe it's called Assemblies of God.

RL: I don't know.

Huff: It's, as you know, a very fundamentalist group. They were awfully unpleasant. They thought it was a sin not only to smoke, but also to turn on a radio, and there was a radio in the lounge, but the Japanese, as I remember, posted a news bulletin too every morning. I think the purser posted one--yes, I confirmed this date--on the 1st of September when Germany invaded Poland. That was rather a shock and it was especially hard because we weren't in a position to learn details or to follow up on it. But it cast a great gloom over most of the people on the ship. I don't know whether the missionaries felt it.

Then we landed at Yokohama, and I was invited to stop for two or three days, I think, with a friend of George Kerr's, Marion Glaeser, who worked in the U.S. embassy in Tokyo. And it may have been as early as that that I met Robert van Gulik. He was then in the Netherlands embassy.

RL: About how old was he at that point?

Huff: I think he was very little older than I--about twenty-nine.

RL: Can you describe him?

Huff: Tall, well groomed, very jolly, awfully jolly, and hospitable. He had quite a large house and a staff of servants and the most magnificent library, and a large part of it, of course, on Chinese music. He was very generous with everything and with advice, and I think it was he who advised me that probably I'd be disappointed in seeking to see private collections in Japan, and that turned out to be absolutely true.

RL: And his wife?

- Huff: He wasn't then married. He married later in China, I think probably in southwestern [China]. I met him and his wife and their three-year-old son in Peking in '45 or '46 when I came back from camp. She was a very beautiful woman.
- RL: Was she Chinese?
- Huff: Yes. And Robert van Gulik, like so many Dutch people, was an excellent linguist. He spoke Chinese and Japanese and English it seemed to me, as well as he probably spoke Dutch. [Laughter] I saw him from time to time during that year when I went up to Tokyo, and I have letters from him still.
- RL: Do you know what turned him to scholarship, because it seems that it was relatively unusual for diplomats to be as excellent scholars in so many fields as he was? The only other person who immediately springs to mind is Sir George Sansom.
- Huff: I don't know, and I don't really know his background. Was he perhaps born in the Far East?
- RL: I don't know.
- Huff: Dutch colonial rule was still strong out there about the time of his birth. I had that impression. I think another thing that gave it to me was the fact that he was a notable--and, in fact, in Japan, a famous--calligrapher. The Japanese bought his scrolls.
- RL: I didn't know that. I'm not surprised, because he was such a multi-faceted person.
- Huff: Yes.
- RL: That's really remarkable. Was he himself a musician?
- Huff: He played the Chinese instruments and probably Japanese too. I don't remember seeing anything except Oriental musical instruments in his house, but it was a big house and may have had pianos and violins in it somewhere.

Kyoto and Japanese Studies

RL: When van Gulik gave you this appropriate warning, how did this change your own scholarly plans?

Huff: When I went to Kyoto, engaged tutors, and had to select a text-- I wanted to continue to read in Chinese and to read also in Japanese--I selected Naitō's History of Chinese Painting. I thought that by reading it--it was quite general, and he was one of the best of the Japanese scholars in the field of China--I would hit upon something, some attractive subject that I might be able to pursue in Japan. I didn't really, and when I went to Peking I just did what I think was the sensible thing to do, since the art objects mostly had been shipped out of Peking anyway; I switched to literature.

RL: How well prepared did you find yourself? I know that Japanese was your second Oriental language. Could you speak?

Huff: I picked up, as they say, enough Japanese to converse with my tutor, and to shop, and to travel, just the usual sort of thing. I never became fluent in Japanese. It's a much more difficult language than Chinese to speak. I think it's one of the most difficult. It's certainly is the most difficult one I ever studied.

RL: That's curious. You must have a very good ear. I've heard other people say the reverse, because of the tonal qualities of Chinese. Japanese seems to flow in a way that sounds more like a Romance language!

Huff: Like French, yes, almost without accent. I guess there is one American, one whom I know, who speaks Japanese almost without, perhaps entirely without, an accent, and that's Edward Seidensticker.

RL: And Donald Keene.

Huff: They say not as well. People who know better than I say not as well, but he does speak it very well, of course, too.

RL: And how about your reading knowledge?

Huff: Of Japanese?

RL: Yes.

Huff: It took a great leap forward [laughter] in Japan! There was no way of avoiding it, and I've always been grateful because I still have to consult Japanese dictionaries and Japanese books. That thirteen-volume dictionary [pointing] is Chinese-Japanese; the definitions are all in Japanese.

My tutor, Chitose Kuroha, was a delightful woman, then middle-aged. I had a card from her a year ago last Christmas. She was not Christian. She was anti-militaristic. She was quite proper in an old-fashioned Japanese way; she would never have worn anything but kimono. And much given to defending the classical arts, both Western and Japanese. I remember I had been given a small portable record player, much smaller than any are now, I think, and I mentioned it to her one day and mentioned some record I had that I thought she might like, and she very haughtily said, "I do not like canned music." [Laughter]

Two other of her students at the same time were John Hall and Donald Shively.

RL: Did you work together?

Huff: No. But we sometimes attended the theatre together and things like that. John was somewhat younger than I, and Donald was ten years younger than I. He was in Canadian Academy, a prep school in Kobe. His parents, of course, were missionaries.

Those were the days when if you walked down the streets in any Japanese city, and it seemed to me every few yards--probably not, but every two or three blocks--there was a large sign saying in kana, "Bikuta."

RL: "Bikuta." You'll have to tell me what it means.

Huff: It meant "Victor."

RL: Ah! Oh! [Laughter]

Huff: And you would enter and order "kofi," presumed coffee, but it wasn't, and a record player would be playing all the time, almost always Beethoven's Fifth [laughter], since when, to this day, I can't listen to it, because most of the Victrolas weren't good, many of the records were scratched, and most of the records, I

Huff: think, were--do they call it "recut?" The Japanese would make one of their own from one imported.

It was Miss Kuroha who spoke to me most frankly--the only one among the Japanese I knew--about the fears she had of what would eventually come of the frenetic nationalism in Japan at that time. I remember one of her specific details--and she said by it she felt certain that war was coming--was that sugar was so scarce, and she said, "There's plenty coming in from Taiwan and other places, but it's being hoarded."

RL: By private people, or the government?

Huff: By the people in the know.

RL: How much time a day did you spend with her?

Huff: I think it was two hours, but I can't remember whether they were morning, or perhaps one was morning and one was afternoon. I remember I prepared for each session by at least two hours of study alone, and sometimes more.

RL: Do you think it was a good system, an efficient system, enjoyable?

Huff: Yes.

RL: Of course, you didn't have the language labs and other aids that people have now, but this one-to-one relationship with a scholar seems enormously luxurious in some ways.

Huff: It was, yes.

RL: Was she well grounded in classical literature?

Huff: In Japanese, yes. She didn't read Chinese.

RL: Was it unusual to have a woman tutor at that time?

Huff: I don't think so. Well, of course, perhaps Donald Shively and John Hall would have gone to a man if there had been as good as one. Miss Kuroha had a very high reputation in Kyoto, and the slightly younger woman with whom she shared a house also tutored foreigners. There were lots of people to be tutored. There were some students, but not as many as now, in Kyoto. But many missionaries passed through Dōshisha University.

Huff: Miss Mary F. Denton, a native of California, northern California, who had gone to Japan in the early days, in what capacity I don't know. She was ancient when I was there. She lived in a big rambling house, was a close friend of many people at Dōshisha, including the Japanese president, I think it was, and anyone who stopped by her house around noon would be asked for lunch. I had been there when there were twelve or fifteen guests. She was as patriotic as the most patriotic Japanese. I think it had been many years since she had been back to this country. I liked her very much. She was very generous and cordial as long as you praised everything Japanese and didn't mention China.

But she was one of those unfortunate people who simply couldn't learn the language. The Japanese who came to her house spoke English. But sometimes, of course, she had to call out a phrase or two. She had been there in the days when rickshas were common. They no longer were in Japan in my day; only the geishas used them. And the story was told of her that she was afraid of the runners speeding, so to speak [laughter], so when one would go a little faster than she thought necessary, she'd call out, "Abunai, kudasai." If it means anything at all, and it doesn't, you'd have to translate it: "Please be dangerous." [Laughter]

RL: [Laughter] Oh, dear!

Huff: "Abunai" is "dangerous," and "kudasai" is "please," literally "come down to me."

RL: Did she live there as an independent woman, or did she work at something?

Huff: That's the impression I had. She surely wasn't working. In her earlier years she may have been. I heard later that when the war came she was specially protected and never lost any of her freedom or anything. She was well taken care of, though she probably died during the war.

RL: In your personal life, did you find the anti-Americanism, anti-Chinese sentiments troublesome and displeasing?

Huff: No, because I think I probably was never drawn into a group where such feelings were predominant. I felt it most at Kobe College among the [American] staff there, but it was mostly tacit.

RL: What was Kyoto like then?

Huff: Oh, it was very beautiful. You know that the city is laid out as it was in the 8th century in imitation of Ch'ang-an the Chinese capital, in a perfect checkerboard--north, south, east, and west. The most beautiful things in Kyoto, of course, were the temples, many of them very beautiful, and many of them with the most beautiful national treasures in them, sculpture chiefly.

RL: Were those all accessible at that point?

Huff: The temples were, yes. I lived near a Zen temple, I think it was. I used to walk through the grounds.

The library that I used at Kyoto has an official English name: The Research Institute for Humanistic Studies.

In Kyoto, I studied calligraphy. It shouldn't be called that, of course. It should be called chirography, unless you write beautifully, as Mr. van Gulik did, but we always talked of calligraphy lessons from Mr. Kobayashi Kikuyo, and I loved it. That's where I developed a real fascination with calligraphy, which I still have.

I also met and had some correspondence with Yanagi Sōetsu, who was the great forerunner of the devotees, now very many of them throughout the world, of Japanese folk art, and director of the Folk Art Museum of Tokyo.

Living in Kyoto at the same time was Samuel Newsom. He's written several books on Japanese gardens, which was what he was studying then. He lives in Marin county, I think, now.

And my good friend also living in Kyoto, Warren Gilbertson, who was studying ceramics with Kawai Kanjirō, and who became, before his too early death in 1954, one of the most noted potters in this country. He was living in Santa Fe. He had a beautiful studio there and a collection. He was driving up to have dinner with friends in Los Alamos, and the car overturned. His wife was not injured and he was killed instantly. He was one of those who urged me to leave the Orient.

RL: Why?

Huff: Well, he said, and I'm sure others did too, that it was almost certain that war with Japan was coming.

RL: How did you live?

Huff: I rented a room in the very American house of Edward Cobb and his wife, who were missionaries there, a nice elderly couple whose children had grown and returned to the States. They both felt very much against the Japanese military, yet Edward Cobb was so discreet that you'd have to be in a sealed room almost for him to say anything. But Mrs. Cobb--I remember once walking on a street with them. We passed two little Korean girls, oh, twelve or thirteen years old, hunched in the cold street. That was when the Japanese were bringing them in; of course, they began it in the late 19th century, bringing those Korean girls in to work in the mills, in the weaving. They were given a cot in sort of a dormitory and bare subsistence in food and, I think, fifteen cents a day was what I was told; their wage was the equivalent of that.

They were so pathetic, and one of them looked up at me and said, "Kirei, ne?" Japanese, of course, had been being taught for some time and they were forced to learn it in Korea. And I was so embarrassed, I blushed. "Pretty, isn't she?" is more or less what it means. And Mrs. Cobb burst out in that still street into the greatest storm of fury, seeing those pathetic little things, victims of the Japanese then, you see, and knowing what was probably going to happen within a year or two. Her husband and I tried to lead her home as fast as we could because, you know, you could be picked up for that kind of thing very easily.

RL: And then what happened?

Huff: If you were picked up?

RL: Yes.

Huff: I never knew. You usually disappeared for a while. But, you know, Japan had that very, very well planned system of espionage. Each unit in the city--and I don't know how large a unit was; it was not large--had, I suppose we'd call him, a warden. Part of his duty, as I understood it, was to report on anything overheard that was dissident.

RL: So that foreigners could be imprisoned rather than deported--is that what you're suggesting?

Huff: I never heard of a case of imprisonment, but this system applied to the Japanese primarily, but a foreigner would be caught in the net too, I think.

RL: Was military force much in evidence on the street in daily life?

Huff: No. The occasions when I saw it were when I was near the railway stations and there was a band of soldiers setting off for China, and I suppose I could have stood that with equanimity, but there were as many women. They had on mother hubbards--is that what they're called?--kind of an engulfing white thing with sleeves, over their kimono, well, all around them, and then these great diagonal sashes, which had patriotic mottoes on them. I can't remember now what they said. And then, when the soldiers boarded the train, and before and as the train pulled away, all of these women, many of them with tears streaming down their faces, would raise their hands and shout, and it was a shout, "Banzai! Banzai! Banzai!" Ten thousand years! It was a dreadful sight. I saw that more than once because reinforcements were always being sent.

RL: How much access did you have to news, other than through Japanese government sources?

Huff: The Cobbs subscribed to an English paper. It was probably published in Kobe. I think there was a rather large English paper there. The news was certainly not whole; the news was Oriental news.

RL: But, in general, was this a happy period for you because you were learning?

Huff: Yes. And so eager to go to China. And I felt so much closer to that [laughter] than I had in Cambridge.

Kobe College: Teaching English to Japanese Schoolgirls

RL: When you were in Kyoto, I think you mentioned earlier, under the terms of the Radcliffe part of your fellowship, you were teaching.

Huff: Yes, I think it was after Christmas that I taught a two-month term at Kobe College, a college for girls in Nishinomiya, outside of Kobe. That was a Christian school. Oh-h-h how I suffered!

RL: How's that?

Huff: Charlotte De Forest was the well-known president, and the teaching staff, which wasn't great, probably eight or ten people, were all American women missionaries. No smoking. Virtually, as I recall it, no smiling, although that can hardly be true. And one of the most painful things was dinner. I stayed overnight. I never stayed there consecutive weeks. I'd go up, stay two or three days and teach, and then go back to Kyoto. One of the things that made me so sad was that a long grace was said before dinner, and the whole burden of it was a prayer for the dear Japanese soldiers in China, never once suggesting that the Chinese who were being tortured and routed should be prayed for.

RL: And these were all Americans?

Huff: Yes, as far as I can recall.

RL: What denomination were they?

Huff: [Pauses to think] It was Protestant, of course, but I don't remember which--Methodist, probably, or Presbyterian.

RL: Was the student body Japanese?

Huff: Yes, all Japanese, and always giggling. It was very hard to teach them because they would hold their hands in front of their mouths and giggle. [Gesturing with hand in front of face.] And all I can remember is--there were twenty or twenty-five in each class--all these little girls in their dark blue uniforms, all like this. [Makes same gesture] [Laughter]

RL: What were you teaching them, or trying to teach them?

Huff: It was called English literature. I was trying to use it as a vehicle for teaching them some rules of English composition. I remember I was reading a short story with them, possibly by H.G. Wells. In any case, the hero in it was a child who had a traumatic fall which affected the rest of his life in ways I don't remember. It came soon after he had had an attack of measles.

I began each class by questioning the students about the preceding day's reading to see if they had got the point. So, I asked the class what had happened to the hero when he was a boy that had affected his later life. I called on one after another,

Huff: and I was practically to the last student. They'd all just gone [putting hand in front of mouth]. [Laughter]

Finally I said, "Now, Miss--," whatever her name was, "I'm sure you remember. You've read the story." So, she stood up to recite, and still half giggling, said, "Please, he had the measles." [Laughter]

RL: Were these high school girls? High-school-age?

Huff: Probably, I think, yes. Fifteen, sixteen.

RL: And was all the language of instruction in English?

Huff: I think it was. I didn't visit other classes there, but I think it was entirely in English.

Summer Touring in Indochina

Huff: Then, when summer came, I packed up what little I had. I had bought a few books in Tokyo and Kyoto. I left everything except a suitcase full of summer clothing in Kyoto and took a train down to Nagasaki, which was a beautiful town in those days. That was the only town in Japan where I saw--they must have been among the very few remaining--women who blackened their teeth. I remember that was a mark of beauty in Japan in Edo times. In Nagasaki I saw a few of those, very old women; they were still blackening their teeth.

RL: What with?

Huff: I don't know what they used. Of course, I saw it again in Indochina, and there it was betel nut, and it was secondary; it wasn't done for that purpose. In Japan, they were dyed, and I don't know what they used for that.

I took a small Japanese vessel to Shanghai. That was the only time I've ever been seasick. The stewards brought out a breakfast of cold rice covered with tiny, cold, whole fish. That was too much. [Laughter]

Huff: In Shanghai I met an American school teacher who had wanted to travel in the summer, and whose companion had got cold feet. Mrs. Cobb, in whose house I lived in Kyoto, had put me in touch with her, and so we joined forces in Shanghai. All of our transportation was mixed up because of the fall of France in June [1940]. We had been booked on Messagerie Maritime ships, and, of course, all those were pulled into port when France fell. In any case, I don't remember how we got from Shanghai to Hong Kong, but we did, by sea. I think it was the same boat, or ship, that went on from Hong Kong and put in at Haiphong, which is the port for Hanoi, which is inland about twenty or thirty miles.

So, we left the ship in Haiphong and went up to Hanoi because I wanted to see the--in those days still, in spite of the fall of France, the École Française d'Extrême Orient still had its main offices in Hanoi, and George Coedès was in charge. I must have gone through this before, because I remember spelling his name for you. A remarkable name.

RL: We only discussed his name. We didn't discuss him.

Huff: Was that all? He was a very dignified, then middle-age chap.

RL: Was he the primary discoverer of Angkor Vat?

Huff: No, no. That was a French explorer not quite a hundred years earlier, in 1861. It was when the French were colonizing and first set foot in Indochina, and this chap quite unexpectedly in the jungle came across the ruins.

Well, I still have beautiful photographs that I bought there in Hanoi. Coedès had a marvelous photographer who photographed everything, every detail, and I bought quite a lot of--I never know what to do with photographs. I take them out and look at them once in a while. [Laughter] I don't like them framed; I mean, except people or something.

Then we took a train, one of the most beautiful train rides I've ever had, from Hanoi, I guess, to Saigon, by way of what was then called Tourane, I suppose no longer there, later called by its Vietnamese name, Danang, a perfectly lovely old city on the coast, still in 1940 probably the nearest thing to Ming China that one could have found.

RL: Really?

Huff: Of course, the culture down there was Chinese largely, and the old Confucian temples, the custodians of them were still wearing the--I've got some pictures someplace--old Ming Chinese garb, or something very, very close to it, which, of course, in turn, is close to the Japanese because the Japanese took over Chinese costume centuries ago and they never changed it sharply. In the Ch'ing dynasty it was changed, but in the Ming dynasty it was still very much the same.

I can't remember how I--the train must have stopped for a few hours in Hué or Tourane, because I remember walking all over the town and it was quite beautiful. The people there were always friendly. Some of them knew a few words of French. Everywhere we went there was somebody who knew a few words of French. Some of it was rather colonial.

RL: What was the Chinese spoken? Would it be Cantonese or Mandarin?

Huff: The Chinese they spoke?

RL: Yes.

Huff: [Pauses to think] I doubt if that far south there was much Chinese. They probably spoke--well, Annamese is related, of course--probably their own dialect.

RL: So, these were not Chinese? This was an Annamese-Ming culture?

Huff: Yes, that's right. I wasn't clear.

RL: I misunderstood and thought perhaps you were discussing the Nanyang.

Huff: If you go back to the Han dynasty ancestors, undoubtedly they're Chinese. At least it was a mixture. It was up in the north, Tonkin; that's where you got the Chinese, south of China, but these people weren't.

It had happened when we boarded the train in the north, and it happened again when we went back on the train at Tourane, that we were overwhelmed with--the typical bon voyage gift, stalks of Indochinese bananas. We didn't know anybody; it was just friendly neighbors. Have you ever seen them? Oh, divine! The stalk was about that long [gestures], I should think, perhaps two feet. The bananas were very small, none of them more than six inches long and I doubt most of them that long. Green; they never turned

Huff: yellow. And they tasted like partially solidified honey. I've never eaten anything so good except one other fruit which I've had. They've tried to cultivate it in other places and they can't. It's called the mangosteen. It's a small, purplish fruit with a hard skin, and you cut off the top much as you do when you eat a persimmon, except that has a soft skin and you eat it with a spoon. This, you cut off the top and see inside six absolutely symmetrical sections of white fruit, and you lift each one out with something like an olive fork. It's a small fork they use, with two tines, I think. And that again is just divine, a lovely fruit. Of course, tropical fruits are good.

I don't know even whether we'd consumed the last banana when we reached Saigon. I remember very little about Saigon. We stayed in a French hotel, a very dirty little place with a shrew of a manager, dreadful woman. We enjoyed Saigon. Of course, it was a city much more provincial than a place like Shanghai, or even Kyoto when I'd been there. The people seemed happy. There didn't seem to be extreme poverty, though there may have been in places where I didn't see it. There were many French people sitting at outdoor cafes and having a grand colonial time--quite a lot of drinking there. A favorite drink was--what's the green drink? Crème de menthe over crushed ice served in a champagne glass and drunk through a straw about three inches long, and everyone sat and drank those.

Angkor Vat

Huff: Well, we made our plans to go to Angkor, and the only way to go was to take a bus to the capital of Cambodia, Phnom Penh. That was a lovely town. Oh, I was sick about the terrible things that were done to that. Was it last year? A lovely town. It was symmetrically laid out with wide, wide boulevards. And, of course, the common mode of transportation there--it was the first time I'd seen it, but later it became a common sight--was the three-wheeler. That was like a bicycle, except there were two wheels at the rear instead of one, and between the two wheels was a seat that would hold, I think, only one person, and then the driver didn't have to pull as with a ricksha; he pedaled.

RL: They were calling them pedicabs when we were there.

Huff: Pedicabs, yes. That's right. I have heard that. We called them three-wheelers, but that was just a direct translation from the Chinese. Hans Frankel was so happy when those came in because he thought it was the most barbarous thing he'd ever heard of for one human being to pull another. It wasn't very pleasant, but I don't know; when you saw how the people lived who couldn't even find work pulling a riksha--well, like so many things, it depended upon how you did it. Some of the pullers really didn't fare so badly and didn't overtax themselves.

RL: Was there a good museum in Phnom Penh at that time?

Huff: Yes, there was a good museum. It was small, but it was well run. The French, of course, have a great deal of respect for antiquity, and I think objects are treated well when they put them in a museum or preserve them.

So, from there we took a boat up to the little town of Siem Reap. That was in the paper not long ago. It's on a river of the same name. It's a few miles southwest of Angkor itself. It's the closest town. It was in Siem Reap that I saw my first and only [chuckle] newborn baby. I stopped in at a little hut to buy a--they take water buffalo hide and make figures of Indian and Indonesian gods--all that never-never-land between Indian religion and Far Eastern. They puncture them with patterns and put them in their windows. They're quite attractive. I stopped in there at a little village house to buy one, and there was the wife of the family lying in bed with a little blob of something, and she was so pleased to see foreigners, she threw back the covers to show us it was a boy. [Laughter] Here it is. [Shows figure]

RL: Isn't that beautiful! [Describing figure] He's about two-foot, natural color, and stained black, and punched, and translucent. I don't know how else one can possibly describe him.

Huff: That's about all that we can say. It's strange I've never seen that art written up. Of course, comparatively little has been done about the folk arts in the Far East. It's warped. I should treat him with--the English have a marvelous--what do they call it? Saddle soap?

RL: Yes.

Huff: They use it on leather. I think I might use that. It might limber him up a bit.

RL: Properts, I think it is.

Huff: When you think back on all the things that have happened, how did I happen to get him all the way back here? [Laughter] I don't know. But here he is.

RL: Thank you.

Huff: Just put him [the figure] on the floor; nothing hurts him. He's tough.

RL: Well, you saw your newborn baby.

Huff: Yes! [Laughter] A red little fellow. I suppose he was a few hours old. His father was just as proud as his mother. They both looked about twelve.

Oh, then, of course, we did go on up river to Angkor. I don't know how long the Japanese had been there. Their infiltration, so to speak, of Southeast Asia had been rather gradual, I imagine. When it started precisely until it reached its climax--when? In the '40s. '41? I don't know. But the Japanese had Angkor; there was no doubt about that. There was a huge, hideous hotel there on the grounds where we stayed. It was the only place you could stay.

RL: By the ruins?

Huff: Yes. And then we spent two or three weeks there. We rented bicycles. One had to have a bicycle, really, because the ruins are vast. There are two complexes, Angkor Vat and Angkor Thom. Angkor Vat is slightly the older, 12th century, and Angkor Thom later, beside it.

The Japanese did allow Cambodian guides. The guide we had when we used one--and we didn't, by any means, all of the time--was a very delightful little Cambodian chap. We didn't have cameras. Did we? [Pauses to think] Maybe Naomi Muensenmeyer had a camera. Most of the pictures I brought back were ones they sold there. Wherever the Japanese went--Yün-kang, any place--they always set up a photographic shop because they always took good pictures, and I was always grateful that they did take very good pictures.

Angkor was an absolutely overwhelming experience. Of course, getting up every single morning and hearing the tropical birds, but the monkeys too. The trees were loaded with monkeys, and they

Huff: were all calling to each other and chattering.

Then we'd go out into the jungle. We had maps and would plot our course for the day and bicycle if we were going to a distant place and then park the bikes and walk all day, or if it was near by not take the bikes at all. Outside of suffering from the deepest sunburn I've ever had in my life, it was no problem. You didn't realize; the sun didn't seem so hot, and then there you were [laughter], done in.

The bas relief sculptures in the temples, especially those in Angkor Vat, were--many of the reliefs, for example, leading up beside the stairs--oh, a foot high, maybe, and they were small, mostly of dancers. I don't think the bas relief has ever been surpassed, certainly in the Far East.

RL: One of the things that impressed me so much there was to see the transitions from the early and much simpler sculpture, which seemed to show Greek as well as Indian influence to the 12th and 13th century more complicated figures. I don't know what was available, what was open, when you were there. We were there in January of 1967.

Huff: You probably saw more. Of course, when I was there, they were still digging out some of the temples, and some of those that probably now have been cleared were overgrown with the roots of the banyan trees. You probably saw that. Marvelous growth.

RL: I envy you three weeks. I don't see how you can have long enough in that area. We had less than a week.

Huff: Yes. Oh, I could have stayed indefinitely, but, of course, there was always Peking just ahead of me. [Chuckle]

RL: There were people living in some of the temples when we were there, the ones about eighteen kilometers from Siem Reap.

Huff: Oh, really?

RL: Yes. There was one where a so-called hermit lived. People were catching snakes. You could see snake skins stretched out to dry.

Did you see any dancing?

Huff: In Angkor?

RL: Yes.

Huff: No. When we were there, there was nothing but the ruins, the jungle, and a kind of skeleton Japanese staff. We didn't even see Cambodians there, apart from guides.

RL: Really?

Huff: No. It was quite different when you were there?

RL: Oh, yes, because the Royal Cambodian Dancers danced three times a week to music at dusk at the entrance to Angkor Vat, with their bodies reflected in the water of the canal. We saw them twice; it was irresistible.

Huff: Oh, it must be!

RL: We had to go. We would have gone as many times as we could have because it was magic. The lighting was flares, not electricity. As the light faded from the sky, they lit flares, and it was just beautiful.

Was the food Japanese?

Huff: [Pauses to think] It probably was. We stayed in that hotel. I really don't remember the food at all. Well, I say probably Japanese. It probably wasn't. Being a Japanese tourist hotel, it probably served what the Japanese conceived to be tourist, which is to say chiefly American, fare. It was probably a kind of compromise with a very poor Western cuisine. It made no impression on me. [Chuckle]

RL: So, basically, my impression of what you're saying was that Cambodia in 1940 was not a French colony, but a country that was being dominated by the Japanese.

Huff: Yes. When we left Phnom Penh, we really seemed to leave the French influence behind. Now, I didn't pry into the organization of Angkor in those days. Maybe at the very top there were Frenchmen. I don't know. We certainly didn't see them.

RL: Were the temples being looked after? Was your impression that the Japanese were protecting them?

Huff: Yes. The environs were clean, and a certain amount of clearing was being done, not a great deal, but some; though I enjoyed the jungle almost as much as I did the temples.

RL: And then did you travel at all in Cambodia?

Huff: No. Phnom Penh and Angkor were all we saw there.

Travels through Japanese-occupied Cambodia and Siam

Huff: Then, to ship back, we had to go to Bangkok. We had booked passage on a ship, I suppose a French ship, because when we got there our passage was no good. We had to take a bus from Angkor to the border of Siam. The bus stopped at an invisible point which we were told was the border, and there about six inches in front of the wheels of the bus was the end of a railroad track. [Laughter] Japanese progress. They had laid a track which ran from there into Bangkok, and we were all herded onto a train that was waiting there and went into Bangkok. I don't remember how long a ride it was, probably two or three hours. Most of the people on the train were tourists. Those that weren't were Japanese officers of one kind or another.

Soon after the train started, a very brusque Japanese came through and demanded our passports. You've probably never been in Japanese-occupied territory?

RL: No.

Huff: That's an experience unlike any other, traveling. This was the first time I did it. The second time was in north China.

Anyway, the Japanese, very brusque--oh, you can't imagine it. They all speak alike and they all use men's language. They don't really speak; they bark. It's rather dreadful. I'm sure they don't mean anything by it. I'm sure too they were trained. Anyway, the man [said], "Passport!" Well, naturally, the times being what they were and the people in the consulates knowing more than we did, we had been warned very firmly never, whatever happens, go to jail first, never let go of your passport. Well, here we were on a Japanese train in Thailand, having this creature complete with sword and, I suppose, gun--I don't know--demanding our passports. So, we gave them up and didn't know whether they'd ever be returned or not, but then, heavens, something would be done. Well, they were, just before we reached the Bangkok station. I suppose they'd been photographed quite a few times and x-rayed. [Laughter]

Huff: So, we reached Bangkok and went to a big hotel there near the station and planned to take a French ship back to--well, we had reservations which we had made, I guess we must have, before France fell, on a French ship back to Shanghai. Of course, there was no such thing then. I don't know exactly the date. Probably August? I'm not sure.

So, we went to the consulate the next day to ask for advice, and met the consul. There was a small group of Americans still in Bangkok--diplomatic officials, consular officials, and a few businessmen, and one, I think, having to do with a rubber company. I'm not sure. But they were all living in great style. One, I remember, had a beautiful pet tiger in his garden.

In the end, we had to wait two weeks to get out, but those people in the American community were so glad to see new faces and entertained us royally. We had a lovely time, and it wasn't intellectual at all. [Laughter] It was very pleasant.

Finally, we were able to book passage on a Dutch ship leaving not from Bangkok; we had to go by train down the peninsula to Penang. Anyway, the whole thing is sort of a blur. We did take the boat or ship there and finally got up to Hong Kong again.

RL: Were you very anxious?

Huff: [Pauses to think] Oh, I don't remember that I was. I tend to live for the day, anyway, and I don't think that I was specially-- I wasn't pleased with the world situation, but personally I don't think I felt any special alarms.

Hong Kong

Huff: No, we took a ship from Thailand not to Hong Kong, but to Haiphong, and I remember that because of a very funny thing. At Haiphong we changed to a smaller boat that was going up to Hong Kong. It was a strangely made vessel. The passengers, of whom there weren't many, were on the topmost deck and the cabins were there too, around it, around the center of it. And, by Jove, what do you suppose swarmed all over the lower deck? Water buffalo.

RL: [Laughter] Really?

Huff: Going up to the Peninsula Hotel in Hong Kong to become steaks.

RL: How extraordinary!

Huff: [Laughter] Poor things. Well, they seemed happy enough wandering around on the deck.

RL: Did they smell?

Huff: They were far enough below us. I suppose if you were down among them, they certainly would have. We didn't get it up there where we were.

But the extraordinary thing was when we reached Hong Kong the water buffalo had to be, for some reason, taken off before we were. So, the whole system went to work, and a very smooth system it was. Around the belly of each water buffalo was put a huge strap that had a ring in the middle of the back, and then that was caught into the chain, and the buffalo was lifted over onto land. But the poor dears were frightened by this, so you can imagine what happened.

RL: What?

Huff: It was an hour's display of water buffaloes urinating.

RL: [Laughter] Oh! And a lot of bellowing, I suspect.

Huff: Oh, yes, yes. But I wondered how the Pacific Ocean could hold it all. [Laughter] Every single one of them, just as they were hoisted.

RL: What was the state of mind in Hong Kong then? Were people expecting a Japanese invasion?

Huff: They didn't seem to be. They seemed to be perfectly complacent. I remember going book hunting there, and all the shops were open. Of course, most of the people we met were English. Several of [Arthur] Waley's books were coming out at that time, and it was in Hong Kong that I bought his prose books, Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China and that sort of thing. He had started out, you know, in Chinese and Japanese poetry when he was young, and then in the '30s he got into prose. Well, of course [Tale of] Genji is mostly prose.

RL: Did you meet members of the faculty of Hong Kong University at that time?

Huff: No.

RL: Or Emily Hahn?

Huff: No.

RL: Why the shudder?

Huff: I don't know really. I've never read her works.

RL: She certainly set Hong Kong by the ears.

Huff: I'm sure.

RL: I remember in 1951, asking a faculty member about her and getting the marvelous response, "That woman overstepped the bounds of human decency."

Huff: It's probably right. What did she write?

RL: She wrote China to Me and a whole lot of things.

I don't imagine that there was very much for you to do in Hong Kong in connection with your art studies?

Huff: No, I didn't pursue it, if indeed there had been. No, before I left Cambridge--of course, knowledge of the resources in the Far East--knowledge in this country--was quite primitive in the '30s compared to what it was after the war. The whole world changed then, of course. No one before I left the States had suggested any cities except Tokyo, Kyoto, Peking, as being likely places for studying Chinese and Chinese art. I suppose I thought of Hong Kong as simply a charming, romantic, English colony.

RL: Did you find it so?

Huff: Yes. I found it very pleasant, though I never went back.

En Route to Peking: Big Send-off from Kyoto with Battledores
and Shuttlecocks

RL: Then from Hong Kong?

Huff: Some way we got back to Shanghai and I went to Kyoto, picked up the things I had left stored there, said good-bye to people, and took a train to Shimonoseki, and a small Japanese ship from there to Tientsin.

Well, I should say that when I was seen off in Kyoto--you know what a great thing the Japanese make of seeing people off.

RL: Can you describe it? What happened?

Huff: Everybody I'd ever met, the children of everyone I'd ever met, the students of every teacher I'd ever had--I can't tell you how many people there were at the railroad station! It was almost as if I'd been a soldier going to China. [Chuckle] And most of them, needless to say, brought gifts.

RL: Such as?

Huff: Well, nine-tenths of them--I could have set up a shop--were the favorite of all Japanese gifts for women, the battledore and shuttlecock.

RL: Really?

Huff: Well, it's the Japanese equivalent. The battledore is usually so decorative that you couldn't possibly play a game with it. It's all over silk in the shape of a geisha--very, very fancy--mounted on a wooden slab. On Girls' Festival day in the spring, girls always received them as gifts and went out in the streets and pretended to play. But you can imagine; what would I do with--? I think I left them on the boat.

RL: That's impressive to me, at the time when Japan's relationships were worsening so much with America and the West, that you could have such a send-off.

Huff: Yes. Well, of course, I'm sure the strings were held very tight at the top, but as little as possible was yet allowed to seep down into the middle classes; they were supposed to know nothing, except, I suppose, among the soldiers.

RL: So, there you were with umpteen battledores, and what else? What was your other loot? Scrolls?

Huff: There were some scrolls, mostly facsimiles, of course. The Japanese produce such magnificent facsimiles of both calligraphy and paintings, especially monochrome paintings. I have one or two of those, I think. Yes, that one hanging as you come down the stairs, that Zen painting of a broom.

On the whole, I had enjoyed the year in Kyoto. I'd have hated to leave it, I think, had I not been going to Peking. I'd have hated to have turned around and come back home with so little time there.

RL: Were you so advised by the American consulate?

Huff: To come home?

RL: Yes. How much pressure from American officialdom was there?

Huff: Those plagued notices from the consulates--I received the first one before I left Japan. I must be right in thinking that it came in the spring of '40. The letter was couched in the most general terms, the most vague. All that anyone as ignorant as I could get from it was that relations among certain nations were, shall we say, delicate, and it might be well to be prepared to go back to the States when one was advised to. It wasn't any stronger than that, really, when I was still in Japan. Of course, in Peking they continued until the last, very strong one in September or October of 1941.

There were a few Americans who saw me off too--Warren Gilbertson, the potter, and Neil Rawlinson, who was off to a career in Japanese and somehow disappeared into the Japanese mist, and Marion Glaeser, who was then secretary to Ambassador [Joseph C.] Grew, and maybe Don Shiveley and John Hall. They were both in Kyoto that year. Well, Don had been there all his life.
[Dog enters]

RL: Well, you left Kyoto and went to Peking.

Huff: I don't remember that trip quite clearly. It was just another trip. Train trips in Japan were pleasant because while the trains went very, very fast, they went through beautiful country. The fields and the farmhouses and the small villages were delightful.

Huff: I always enjoyed them. And then every train stop, of course, there were these neat little fellows in--what did they wear? White cotton trousers, jackets to about here [gestures to below the hip], as I remember it, blue jackets, dark blue jackets, belts, and something on their heads. They would run alongside the train selling--I have to be careful of this because I could so easily make an indelicate mistake, the words are so similar--obentō, it was called--a little wooden lunchbox. You may have had them in Japan. You take off the cover, and inside is a small dish of ice-cold rice, a small dish of pickles, as I remember--Japanese pickles are quite good, I think--and a charming little--you can get them in Cost Plus [Imports]--a charming little expendable, though they didn't use the word then, teapot, full of tea, and the cover of it was your teacup. [Chuckle] They were quite neat.

Then I took some kind of ship to Tientsin, and the train from there up to Peking.

IV CHINA: PEKING, WEI-HSIEN INTERNMENT CAMP, PEKING,
1940-1946

Peking and Chinese Studies

- RL: You mentioned as we ended last time that you were on the train to Peking.
- Huff: Yes. And I probably said I remember nothing of the ride from Tientsin on the train except the first glimpse of the Peking city wall as the train passed just north of it and then curved around with the wall down the west side and entered the city at the northwesternmost gate called the Hsi-chih Men, 'west straight gate,' and the train went on through the city to the south gate where the big railway station was.
- RL: What arrangements did you make in Peking, and what were your plans?
- Huff: Well, in my political ignorance and carelessness [chuckle], I still expected--that, of course, is September, 1940--I expected to return home, as the terms of my fellowship had it, in April, '42, and receive my degree presumably in June of that year. It would have been seven years since I started, and that was just about what the Harvard-Yenching Institute reckoned on in those days for a Ph.D.
- RL: Where did you live, and what domestic arrangements did you make?
- Huff: I lived in T'ung-fu chia-tao, a narrow lane above the broad Teng-shih-k'ou, Lantern Market Portal, in a walled compound that had been, it was said, part of a Ming dynasty temple complex. There were the temple itself, a great, stately hall that was used as living and dining room, a separate kitchen and servants' quarters

Huff: attached at the rear, and, in front, on either side of a garden that held a fox shrine, two low buildings that had originally held the altar equipment for ceremonies. I occupied one of the structures, on the west. It had a study, a small bedroom, and a bath whose tub was a large Chinese fish bowl with patterned brown glaze on the outside and plain turquoise inside. In an earlier year the house had been rented to Owen Lattimore and his wife. The compound was rented by Tirzah Bullington. I shared the main house, the garden, my meals, and the servants with her.

Tirzah was a native of Texas who early in life had studied occupational therapy in New York, gone on to practice it in Honolulu, and from there had traveled to Peking, where she joined the staff of the Peking Union Medical College. Several years before I met her, she had resigned that post and had established an export agency supplying such things as folk arts, embroidery, and jewelry to shops in the United States. She lived in a comfortable way--with a Ta-shih-fu, or Number One Boy, a Number Two Boy, and an elderly female servant, or lady-in-waiting--and gave most pleasant parties. (Near the end of the war she was sent by the Red Cross to the flooded area near Kaifeng; after that, she went on a mission to Kabul; when she returned to the U.S., she joined the Peace Corps and was dispatched to the top of a mountain in Peru.)

RL: When you had all that settled, how did you proceed with your studies?

Huff: I had decided, and I suppose on someone's advice, but I don't remember whose, not to enroll at one of the universities in Peking, but to study with two tutors, one to learn to speak passably well, and for that person I engaged a tall Manchu. The Manchus, of course, had conquered the country in the 17th century and ruled until 1911, and they, people said, because they were not Chinese, spoke better Chinese than anyone else in the whole country, and so, many of them became tutors of the spoken language.

RL: Was this a valid judgment?

Huff: It was precise in my experience, yes. Most of the Manchus, I think, remained in or near the north, where the standard language, so-called Mandarin, was spoken. I doubt if they ever got down to the southern provinces, though I don't know; some of them may have.

Huff: And then for the other tutor I engaged a Chinese who was recommended by Francis Cleaves. The tutor was at that time on the staff of the learned journal published by the Catholic University of Peking. The journal was called Monumenta Serica. And with him I began reading old, old texts--the older dynastic histories, the great early 6th century anthology called Wen-hsüan, Tu Fu, and so on, T'ao Yüan-ming.

The Manchu teacher of the spoken language was very business-like. [Laughter] He came on the hour and left on the following hour.

RL: In your conversation classes did you ever run out of things to discuss?

Huff: I think I had no textbook. I had bought--oh, Aldrich's work on the spoken language. It was very popular among the language school students there. I think we never used it. Mr. Ho, his name was, always came with things in his head to talk about, often current events.

Oh, we'd always start off in a formal way; as you know, the greeting in the morning, and I guess well into the day was--"Ni hao. Ni ho ch'a la ma?" "Are you well? Have you had your tea?" [Laughter]

But the other tutor would become interested in the texts we were reading and would stay a long time, and then sometimes it was so late we'd go out to bookshops. Many of these books [looking around the book-lined study] I bought on those occasions. And then we'd stop in the Chinese city south of the Imperial City and have a Chinese dinner.

My favorite restaurant was one called En-ch'eng-chü in the south city. It was so old that the street had grown way up higher than its, they said, 16th century level. So, you had to go down five or six steps to reach the level of the restaurant. Of course, as in Elizabethan England, the streets were the dumps. [Laughter] Things accumulated.

RL: Was it the same in Peking?

Huff: Not when I was there, no. At least, I never saw people--well, with this exception, that many of the streets were still unpaved, and people purposely threw out their laundry water or washing water just to lay the dust.

- RL: What did you typically eat for an ordinary Peking supper with your tutor?
- Huff: We'd usually order three dishes. There's no word that translates ts'ai properly. Steamed rice and then three--oh, my favorite dish was eel cooked in Peking in a way I've never found it any place else and absolutely divine. Usually a chicken dish, sometimes spring rolls. I never was fond of Chinese desserts--well, I've never been fond of any desserts especially. Maybe sometimes we had walnut soup for dessert.

Contacts with Chinese Scholars

- RL: Many people said they had difficulty moving into Chinese society. I don't mean high society; I mean into the life of the Chinese--
- Huff: --intellectuals.
- RL: Yes.
- Huff: Hard. It wasn't easy. I think--I didn't quite understand it. I don't feel any irritation over it at all. I think that on the whole Westerners, especially those attempting to study Chinese, were slightly looked down upon, and most of us were beginners.

I remember a very embarrassing moment. I was attending the lectures of Yü Chia-hsi, a great scholar. He was teaching at the Catholic University of Peking and I was attending his course there in medieval literature.

He spoke perfect Mandarin, and I was in, I guess, my second year in Peking. And after he'd made a certain point about an early Chinese poet, he looked down at me, which was quite rare in the formality of those classes--I was the only Westerner in the class--and said quite abruptly, "Ni tung pu tung?" "Do you understand that?" [Laughter] May I add that I was so embarrassed I excused myself? I think he really believed I couldn't have understood.

- RL: I think it's remarkable that you could take a course given in Chinese.

Huff: In my opinion, in most people's opinion, Chinese is extremely easy to speak--no inflections, no cases, no genders.

RL: What about the tones?

Huff: Oh. The tones are important, but not for every syllable, and you sort of get on to it. Key words in the sentence, you learn to pronounce the tones correctly. But the Chinese always joked about how the students of the Chinese Language School spoke. The favorite joke about the students who graduated there was that they pronounced the tone of every syllable. [Laughter] It just struck them as screamingly funny!

RL: When you were taking, or auditing classes at Catholic University did you have much contact with the Chinese students? Did they accept you?

Huff: No. I was a foreigner and I was a woman. [Laughter] Well, they were polite enough. I used to have ice cream with them once in a while, so-called ice cream. I've forgotten what it was made of, but it was neither cream nor ice.

RL: It's made from bean curd, isn't it, tou-fu.

Huff: The Japanese use bean curd in those confections. The Chinese probably did it, yes.

RL: It's curious that there should be this Chinese resistance to people coming to learn. I'm very sympathetic with the Chinese resistance to the sorts of foreigners that I met in Hong Kong. Perhaps it's unfair to label them "the British-American Tobacco People."

Huff: Well, that's a type. In a sense, it's a type, yes.

RL: But the people who, as you say, laughing at yourself now, took classical Chinese so seriously, why were you not taken seriously by Chinese scholars?

Huff: Well, because, to them, I was just stumbling along where a five-year-old child would be. Professor [Y.R.] Chao--you've done tapes with him?

RL: Yes.

Huff: He told me that he was raised very strictly by intellectual parents and grandparents, I think. He said that if he hadn't been able to recite from memory the three-hundred-odd poems in the Shih-ching, classical poetry--if he hadn't been able to recite all of those by the age of five, he'd have been thrown out. [Laughter] That's undoubtedly an exaggeration. But five! I don't know how many characters--I should have asked him how much he could read at five of the Spring and Autumn chronicles.

RL: Did you know Achilles Fang at this time?

Huff: Yes.

RL: Please tell me about him.

Huff: He was one of Francis Cleaves' discoveries. I don't know how Francis discovered him, but he did, and at least a year before I had reached Peking. Francis learned that the people at Monumenta Serica were about, I think not to let Achilles go, but to reduce his salary or working hours. He must have been on a salary there. He had an office and he did--oh, I don't know what Monumenta Serica would have been without him, because he was the one that read all the articles for accuracy.

Anyway, Francis discovered him and engaged him as a tutor. I think Achilles hadn't been a tutor before. Then Francis introduced him to me when I came and to Bob Hightower when he came, so Achilles taught all of us over there, as he continues to teach people now at Harvard. I saw him last month. He hasn't changed very much.

He had the same mania then, and I think that is not too strong a word for it, that he has now, of book collecting. He simply couldn't resist a good book, especially if it was a bargain. [Laughter] You know this book by Sir Percival David.* [Shows book]

RL: Oh, my. Yes.

Huff: It came out a few years ago. I think it was fifteen dollars. I noticed three copies of it in Achilles' office last month. I said,

*Chinese Connoisseurship. The Ko Ku Yào Lun. The Essential Criteria of Antiquities. A translation made and edited by Sir Percival David. Faber & Faber, London, 1971.

Huff: "For heaven's sake, Achilles. Isn't one enough? I know you like the book fairly well, as well as you like any Westerner's book." [Chuckle] He said, "But they're on sale, a dollar each. How could I resist them?" [Laughter]

Every year at this time when those hideous income tax forms face me, I think I must stop buying books but then, by June I've forgotten it. [Laughter]

RL: Was Achilles Chinese or Korean?

Huff: He made the remarkable error--he should have known better, because he is a very intelligent person--of passing himself off as a Chinese. He is Korean. Understandably, he may have been fearful of the Japanese. When he was fifteen, you know, near Seoul, a group of missionaries singled him out and gave him a year in a prep school in, I think Fukien, anyway, China, and a good Christian prep school, because they thought he should have a better education. He continued and made his own way in China then, which must have been rather remarkable. He was fifteen when he went over there.

RL: Amazing!

Huff: He studied Greek (whence his name), Latin, and German--one or more of them under Gustav Ecke. At the age of seventeen, he took the examinations and was admitted to both Tsing Hua and Yenching. He chose Tsing Hua. I guess he didn't continue formal education in China after taking the A.B. and ultimately came to this country in '47. He took his doctor's under Harry Levin in comparative literature. He wrote an enormously long thesis--I wish he'd publish it--on Ezra Pound.

RL: Oh yes, I've heard about that. Still not published?

Huff: Everyone else in the world is publishing books on Ezra Pound. There must be about one hundred on the market at the moment. Every other book is about him, it sometimes seems to me. [Laughter] He is fascinating.

RL: And your other Chinese friends?

Huff: I can't remember many names. There were Pi Shu-t'ang, Librarian of Tsing Hua, Mr. Wang, a student of art and accomplished pyrographer, who stored some of my art pieces in my absence from Peking, and Miss Wang, assistant to Tirzah Bullington in directing the work of embroiderers.

European and American Colleagues

Huff: My social life was probably about half foreign and half Chinese. Of course, among the foreigners, there were students, German and American I remember most. If William Empson was still there, I didn't meet him. He probably wasn't. There were the students, and then a certain number of Americans and English too who were in business--British-American Tobacco Company and so on. The Chinese art critic Jean Pierre du Bosc was living there. Later mostly in Switzerland. Henri Vetch. [Laughter]

RL: What can you tell me about him?

Huff: By the time I reached Peking, he was into bookselling and publishing--he had a bookstore in the Peking Hotel. Well, he published that book I was looking at, a guide to Peking, and he was the publisher of Monumenta Serica. He was prematurely white, tall, very jolly [laughter], and, I think, a very good businessman probably. But, you know, it was a mystery. I never could discover after the war when I went back to Peking what had happened to him. He wasn't there. There were various rumors, vague, as I recall them, to the effect that he had escaped from Peking while the Japanese were still there and had gone south, but I don't know. He could have gone to a place like Saigon where there was a big French colony, or to Hong Kong.

The people I saw most frequently were the other foreign students. We often met together, went to museums together, had dinners together, entertained each other after dinner, and so on. We were frightfully serious. [Laughter] At least the Americans were. Terribly important.

RL: What do you mean, "frightfully serious"?

Huff: About the importance of classical Chinese for the world. [Laughter] No laughing matter, that!

RL: Who were the students?

Huff: Arthur and Mary Wright were both there from '41 on. Bob Hightower, James Robert--he always writes his whole name--Francis Woodman Cleaves [laughter], who always uses his full name, was there. Helmut Wilhelm, now retired, professor of Chinese at Seattle, was there. Walter Liebenthal was there. There was also Walter Fuchs, scholar in the field of Manchu studies, and Gustav Ecke, author

- Huff: of a large book on Chinese furniture and later curator of Far Eastern art in the Honolulu Academy of Art.
- RL: Where was Helmut Wilhelm from at that point? Was he from Frankfurt?
- Huff: [Pauses to think] Where did his father teach? He was the son of Richard [Wilhelm], the great Sinologist. Frankfurt or Hamburg. Franke was from Hamburg.
- RL: Which Franke was that?
- Huff: Otto. Herbert whom I like very much--I never met the other--is in Munich, unless he's retired now. Who were most of the other students? There were lots in the language school. You know, there was that Chinese language school that had been started by and for missionaries, and some people studied there. Tirzah Bullington had studied there when William B. Pettus, who lived in Berkeley later and made gifts to the E.A.L., was director of the school. I didn't. But most of the people there I didn't know because they were in the missionary field. Nobody tried to convert me. I made it obvious that I was not convertible [laughter], so to speak.

A Switch in Thesis Topics

- RL: Were you still planning to do your thesis in art history in Peking?
- Huff: Oh, yes, yes. Van Gulik had helped me quite a lot. Sergei Elisséeff had told me to write a thesis on Ni Tsan, I guess I told you the reason, because the Japanese had done quite a lot on him. He was a famous 13th century painter. But nothing had been done in the West, so I could just read the Japanese articles and write a thesis. I didn't think much of the idea. But when I met Mr. van Gulik [in Japan], I told him of that, and he said, "That's rubbish. Don't you dare do such a thing. There is a very good subject and I can give you quite a long bibliography and you can pick up the books in Peking. It's worth doing, and it would be interesting, and that's the whole history of the plum blossom in art and literature."

Huff: So, when I went to Peking, that's what I started on. You may have noticed Hans Frankel's book on this has just now come out.* He's been working on it since '48, I think. Well, for several weeks, I'm sure, I did nothing about the thesis in Peking. I was settling in, buying a few necessary things for the house, and having bookshelves made, and so on.

Then, by the time I decided I must start, Achilles [Fang] was already teaching me, and, oh, the scorn he felt for the plum blossom! [Laughter] And when Achilles feels scorn, he gets results. So, he said, "The only thing to do--in America, they don't have any good books. In the West they don't have any good books about Chinese literature," which was perfectly true, I think, no very good ones, "Translate Huang Chieh's Shih hsüeh, Poetics," a book of twenty-odd folio, double pages, so that was what I worked on.

Well, I wrote to Mr. Elisséeff and asked him if I might switch from plum blossoms to poetics [chuckle], and he wrote back a letter which, luckily, I saved, that said, "Anything you select is all right."

"The Years that were Fat": Excursions and Pleasures

RL: I think I mentioned I just reread a book about those years in Peking, The Years That Were Fat.**

Huff: Oh, one of my favorities! Maryon's [Monahan] just been rereading it this week. I've read it twice. I knew George Kates. Of course, he was there when I was. Isn't that a delightful book?

RL: Yes, and marvelously evocative.

Huff: Absolutely true. He was the most sensitive American, I think, sensitive to things Chinese, who ever lived there, in my experience.

*Hans H. Frankel, The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady: Interpretations of Chinese Poetry, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1976.

**George N. Kates, The Years That Were Fat: Peking 1933-1940, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1952.

Huff: He lived on the street that was named for the imperial granary on the northeast corner of the Imperial Palace grounds.

RL: How much of that atmosphere of leisure and scholarship was there when you arrived, which was, after all, well after the Japanese incursions into China?

Huff: Yes, three years after. I think that atmosphere was still pervasive in Peking. Until Pearl Harbor, the only noticeable Japanese in Peking, as far as I can remember, were the soldiers, who regularly became quite tipsy drinking almost nothing. There was a certain number of Japanese professors at the universities whom we met from time to time, and they were fine, unprejudiced people. And, of course, being there, they were interested in Chinese culture, as many Japanese always have been. The soldiers weren't pleasant, but they didn't cause us any trouble. They were just awfully noisy. [Chuckle]

RL: What did you do for your recreation, besides your studying?

Huff: In Peking?

RL: Yes.

Huff: Bicycle. I bought a secondhand English bike, which was marvelous. It was the first bicycle I'd ever ridden that had hand brakes, and I was very proud of my cycling ability when I was young, and I don't know why. When I got the bike, I polished it first, or tried to. [Laughter] Then I mounted it and rode down to the American legation, which was quite a long ride, and unconsciously tried to brake with my feet, and went sailing--it must have been a beautiful sight; I wish I had a movie of it--over a row of very carefully tailored shrubs [laughter] that was in front of the embassy. I landed right in the middle of them; it was a fairly soft landing. [Laughter]

I used to bicycle out to Yenching University. I'd met people out there, some of the English and American and Chinese teachers--Lucius Porter, William Hung. That was a trip of several miles, four or five, I should guess. I'd go to the northwest gate, where the trains came in, Hsi-chih Men, and then go northwest to Yenching. It was just west of the Summer Palace, out in the country. Beautiful.

Before you reached Yenching University you passed the zoo, and the zoo was lovely.

RL: I've never heard about it.

Huff: I know; one doesn't. I hadn't until I was there. The animals were all well kept, and the keepers were great tall men, seven feet or more, who were said to be, and must have been, Manchu eunuchs, elderly eunuchs who as boys had been in the palace.

RL: I hadn't heard that.

Huff: They grew very tall, you know. I don't know why that is. Or else they chose the tall ones. I don't know. But they were very, very tall men, quite striking in Peking.

RL: Did the Chinese go to the zoo very much?

Huff: I think so. Oh, yes. You saw children there with their parents, yes. I remember I was much taken with the camel. Of course, I still saw camel trains that had come from Central Asia coming into the city by the same gate, the northwest gate.

RL: That had crossed the silk route?

Huff: Yes.

RL: What did they carry?

Huff: I just remember they were laden. I don't know what they had been carrying. I think when they went back, they took silk, as they had for centuries, but what they brought in I don't know.

In certain seasons, they were the strangest looking animals. Have you ever seen a shedding camel?

RL: Yecch! [Laughter]

Huff: [Laughter] It's odd--clumps of hair--

RL: Shabby looking.

Huff: Yes. Very smelly beasts too, as I recall.

RL: I'm sorry. They always seem to get a bad press. [Laughter] About how many in a train, do you remember?

Huff: Four or five, as I recall.

RL: You mentioned going to museums. Now we hear from people coming back from China of how beautifully organized they are and of the excellent curators. What was the situation then?

Huff: Oh, quite different. Museums were in palace buildings within the palace enclosure, the so-called Forbidden City. Let's see. One of the larger buildings at the north of the enclosure was devoted to paintings, and they weren't very interesting, paintings and also late Ch'ing porcelain, cloisonné, and such things.

Then, my favorite was one of the smaller buildings in the southeastern part of the compound which had the antiquities, the real antiquities, bronzes and such things.

But, you see, the Chinese, of course, knew that the Japanese were on their way, and the very great things--the things that you've probably seen that I never have--except those sent to London--that are now in Taiwan--had been moved out before the Japanese came in. They were down in Chungking. Or to Chengtu did they move them first? I've forgotten. Chengtu, I guess. In Szechwan province, anyway. So, I never saw the really good things.

The most interesting and important examples of Chinese art I saw were not great in numbers, but were very, very great in importance. They were in the museums in Japan, things that had gone over to Japan from about the 13th or 14th century on.

RL: As early as that?

Huff: Some kinds of Chinese painting--for example, the so-called Contemplative School--were appreciated; their products were appreciated by the Japanese before the Chinese really came to like them. While the Chinese were still concentrating chiefly, from the Sung dynasty on, on landscapes, black and white, the Japanese were beginning to buy Buddhist things. Some of the most beautiful ones are in Japan still. The Japanese take such wonderful care of them.

RL: Did you have access to private collections?

Huff: I remember seeing only one in Peking. A very reserved Chinese, a retired scholar, as a great favor to me and three or four Chinese friends, asked us, after swearing us to lifelong secrecy, [chuckle]--it's all right, since I can't remember his name--to see his paintings, and they were very nice. Of course, as is the case with many collectors, and it certainly isn't limited to China, he seriously, seemingly, antedated what he had by several centuries in every case. [Laughter]

RL: Did you take the usual--I shouldn't say "usual" because they seem so nostalgic, romantic, inaccessible--expeditions to the Summer Palace, and eat the elaborate picnic lunches?

Huff: Yes. I didn't frequent the Summer Palace, as many people did. It was frightfully popular with foreigners, of course. The picnics were very elaborate--all-day affairs, complete with servants and everything. I didn't like that kind of thing.

I went frequently to the grounds of the Forbidden City. It was open and there were places near the lakes--you know, there are three lakes that sort of wind their way down through the grounds of the Forbidden City called North Lake, Middle Lake, South Lake, and hills around. Coal Hill was a famous one. We used to picnic around those places. That's where Tirzah Bullington was almost killed by a scorpion sting once.

To the Yün-kang Caves with Arthur and Mary Wright, October, 1941

RL: You were going to tell me about the short trip you had out of Peking during the Japanese occupation.

Huff: Yes. I had received in the summer, for my supposed last year of study, the Radcliffe award called Catharine Innes Ireland Travelling Fellowship. Its stipend that year was \$1334.62. In September of '41, Arthur and Mary Wright came to Peking and settled in. I conceived the idea, and they thought it was marvelous and we should make a group thing of it, of visiting the famous Yün-kang Buddhist caves in Ta-t'ung, Shansi province.

RL: How long a trip was that?

Huff: Well, we took the train up through the wall and down [gesturing]. I suppose it must have taken--oh, the train was slow! It must have taken close to a day and a night. It took us a long time to receive permission from what was laughingly called the Japanese Embassy in Peking. They finally gave us permission to be gone out of Peking, to stop only at Ta-t'ung, for eleven days, I think it was.

So, we took the train, and when it reached Chang-chia-k'ou, two or three Japanese soldiers, the most rough type, boarded the train and took us off, and took us into some kind of a guard house,

Huff: I suppose it was, very near the station. They had us sit down in a small room with themselves and with a representative of that saddest and most dangerous kind of person then common in North China, the Russians who were working for the Japanese, often as interpreters. I suppose they were afraid of the Japanese, and probably with good reason.

RL: Were these White Russians and stateless people?

Huff: I think so, yes. Many of them had come down from Harbin and such places.

Well, this chap was fairly young, in his forties, maybe, and the Japanese would bark Japanese questions, and then he would bark them, literally, to us. He had a dreadful way of reaching forward and snapping his fingers about half an inch from your nose. [Chuckle] It was unpleasant!

Oh, we were there a long time. But finally they let us board the train to continue to Ta-t'ung.

RL: Did you get any idea of what the Japanese suspected or what they wanted?

Huff: They seemed to suspect us of not telling all, or the truth, about why we wanted to go. No foreigners would make that trip just to see some old stone statues. It seemed to be that. That was all I could tell.

RL: Was the implication, then, that you were perhaps spying for the Chinese?

Huff: It could have been. [Pauses] I don't know. We must have seemed so awkward. You'd have thought they--[laughter]. Well, I guess you can't tell a spy by looking.

RL: That's for sure. And what language did the Russian use? Was he translating into Chinese or English?

Huff: Into English. He spoke fluently. English, Japanese, Russian. He probably spoke Chinese too.

But then we went on and came to Ta-t'ung, which is just a bit north of the site of the rock sculptures and caves. When Buddhism came East across Central Asia, the cave temples were built on the

Huff: south slopes of mountains overlooking rivers, and so it was at Yün-kang. There was a very small river there, but it was a river. A very beautiful setting.

I think we had rickshas or a bus, which we took from the town of Ta-t'ung down to the cave site, and then we'd spend all day there. Of course, the caves were guarded by Japanese soldiers. We couldn't really set our own pace very well, and that's why we kept going back, because if a soldier decided we'd been long enough in one cave, he'd shove us out. [Chuckle]

RL: Were they taking good care of them?

Huff: Yes. And they had set up, of course, a photography shop nearby, across the road, and were selling Japanese photographs taken there. [Cat, Percy, comes in.] This is a photograph I bought there. [Shows photograph]

RL: Marvelous. How would you describe that?

Huff: Kneeling Bodhisattva in bas relief.

RL: How big was the original?

Huff: Less than life-size. It was up near the ceiling. Probably four feet I should think--something like that.

The caves were completely carved inside, and some of them outside, and the proportions were so nearly perfect that when you were in one of the caves, all of the figures seemed to be life-sized.

RL: Curious, because people speak sometimes about Chinese art as having no sense of perspective.

Huff: Oh, um-hmm. Early paintings. They didn't have ours, of course. I think they developed a great sense of perspective long before the Japanese did in their painting, beautiful as some of those early scrolls are. Well, the Japanese had their own style in perspective; it always seemed to me distorted.

Traces of painting remained on some of the carvings. Of course, they covered centuries.

RL: Perhaps you'll get to see them again, and perhaps I'll get to see them sometime.

Huff: I never read anything about those sites now. I'm sure they're well taken care of. Oh, the Japanese are so fond of putting out these. [Chuckle] This is a funny little Japanese pictorial map. [Unfolds map] That's the city of Ta-t'ung [points to map]. That's the caves.

RL: [Looking at map] That's very nice. I don't know how accurate it was, but in its layout it looks better than many of the sort of representational things you see put out by the National Parks here, for instance.

Huff: Oh, yes.

RL: I'll have to think of some way of describing this. Unfortunately, you know, the tape recorder is not a visual thing. [Laughter] This is a foldout brochure with a colored descriptive rather than accurate map of the walled city of Ta-t'ung, and it shows the river winding along and the cave site with indications of the cave figures. In the background there are mountains, other rivers leading out to the sea, and then there appears to be a space in the non-colored part for one's own notes, and a more detailed black and white map of the walled city with Japanese characters. On the reverse there's a schematic, but not displeasing, representation of the two large stone figures, and then a typical, I would imagine, sort of guidebook description of some of the monuments, with black and white photographs interspersed, about six or eight columns of type. Would you say that was accurate?

Huff: Yes. There were wooden structures built up in front of the caves, partly as a protection to them, I think, and partly to accommodate visitors. I don't see any visible means of ascent there, but there must have been steps. Well, I guess they were inside.

RL: They look as though they could be very comfortable, with balconies and tiled roofs.

Huff: Yes. And dark except at noon, of course, facing south, there was always a bit of sunlight.

RL: And as far as a building can, it looks as though it grew there as it crawls up the mountainside.

Huff: Yes, yes. And there are caves, you see, that don't have--[pointing to picture] here they don't have the protection. And centuries of weather must erode every cave. It's limestone. It's not the

Huff: granite that's at Loyang. It's limestone, and it easily wears away.

RL: So, you had that one expedition. Just the three of you, was it?

Huff: Yes.

"Cry Havoc": the Japanese Occupation of Peking before and after Pearl Harbor

RL: What were the American official attitudes to American residents in the city through 1941? Were you warned to leave?

Huff: Oh, yes. The earliest warning I received in Japan was a letter from the consulate in Osaka. It must have come in the--what?--spring of '40? Possibly as early as that. Then, when I went to Peking that fall--of course, in the summer, I didn't hear anything, being in Indochina. We read papers, but the news was only about France and the European war. There must have been other letters after I reached Peking in September [1940]. The only one I remember--I wish I'd saved them--was a very strong one that came to me in November [1941], either October or early November, urging all Americans to book passage on the Mariposa, which was leaving Tientsin, I believe, in November.

I remember receiving it, standing and looking out at the garden in front of my Peking place. Warren Gilbertson, the potter, had visited me in Peking the Christmas before and had urged me very strongly to come home. He'd said, "There is definitely going to be war, and the Japanese definitely are not going to be kindly." I stood thinking about it the day I received that letter, and a German scholar stopped by. I think he had heard about the letters being received. He asked me what I was going to do, and when I looked at him, my mind was made up. I said, "I'm staying."

RL: What tripped the switch?

Huff: I don't know, but I decided it. I don't know. I had been for those some minutes or longer wavering, and, of course, in a situation like that you are wavering between two unknowns. And, of course, the chance I could finish my thesis--there was still a bare chance, I suppose, that there wouldn't be war. I decided

Huff: that I probably had more to lose by going home with the thesis hardly even started than by staying and taking such chances as might come, so I stayed. I never regretted it. My health would have been better, but that's never been of primary importance to me. And I even had my tutors until we were interned. (We weren't interned until March of '43.) They were frightened for the first two or three days [after Pearl Harbor] and then everything was calm, and they came back.

RL: How much news did you have of the European war, and how much were you aware of the real quality of the Nazi regime?

Huff: The only news we had was that that the Japanese thought was all right for people to see. That was true for the Chinese as well as the English papers. I absolutely loathed the whole thing about Hitler--of course, I'd had just the least taste of it in Munich the summer I spent there [1937], and I suppose there I had formed a great--I don't like the word; I rarely use it--but really great hatred of what was going on there. I think I told you I had some Jewish friends there who were sent to concentration camps.

In Peking there were Nazis. There were people more or less--they were a little older than I, I think--people doing research or just plain students, as I was, on government grants from Berlin, I heard. I knew a couple of them. I didn't like either. I suppose there was nothing else they could do. But, oh, they belonged to a Nazi Verein, and every once in a while there'd be pictures in the papers of the group. I remember one of them saying to me once in my own house, and he said it with considerable scorn, "Democracy is nothing but a word." I said, "That's not true. We haven't got there yet, but it's an ideal we're working toward, and surely there's something admirable in it. It's not finished with." But they could hardly enjoy free speech as Germans living there at that time.

One couple, while having to make all the right gestures--what was the gesture with which you greeted a person when the greeting was "Heil Hitler!"?

RL: Like that. [Swings arm up straight]

Huff: Yes. The German couple I knew, the married couple, were older than average. The husband was elderly at that time. They lived very quietly, and I enjoyed stopping by to see them because they didn't talk about Europe at all. They'd lived in the Orient for so long, I guess they didn't feel very close to it.

RL: What was the political situation of Peking when you came, that was what year?

Huff: It was September, 1940.

RL: Who was in executive control of the city? Was it the Japanese?

Huff: Yes. They took--the Marco Polo Bridge incident, which started the whole business, was, I think, in '37. I'll look it up, but I think it was '37.

RL: Yes, I think that's right.

Huff: And they took Shanghai in the fall, a little later, of '37, and Peking, I suppose, before Shanghai, and I can't be sure. But they had a complete system, complete with big cement buildings for their administration and all that kind of thing, by the time I had reached there.

RL: What effect did the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor have on Peking?

Huff: Well, at five o'clock in the morning of December 8--it was the 7th here, wasn't it?--one of the wealthiest, perhaps the wealthiest American in town, John C. Ferguson--I wish somebody could have made a tape of some of his experiences.

RL: Who was he?

Huff: A very influential person who had gone as a missionary to Nanking from Boston, probably in the '90s, and as missionaries sometimes do, had done very, very well. By the time I met him, he was living in Peking in a huge compound, very beautiful, and he was close to important Japanese. He had become so over the years. He also had Chinese friends, of course. He was living more or less as a retired gentleman with a staff of young Chinese who translated for him--or scanned, for he read Chinese--and did various kinds of research. He wrote lots of articles on learned subjects. They seem frightfully dated now, but they were quite important in their day.

Well, Mr. Ferguson sent servants all over Peking at five o'clock that morning to tell the Americans about Pearl Harbor and to advise us to stay in, not to go out in the streets until we heard again. So, we didn't go out in the streets, and I don't know what effect it had on the city as a whole, probably a kind of

Huff: electric shock, though lots of people must have expected it.

Then, after dark, Chinese friends started coming by, very quietly indeed. And I think it was perhaps as early as the first day that the Japanese ordered us to black out our houses. I think the servants were able to go out and buy black paper, and we sealed all the windows. I don't remember how long that lasted; I don't think very long. After all, the first months of the war, there wasn't much to be feared from America. [Chuckle] It was all going the Japanese way, wasn't it, for quite a while?

RL: Oh, yes.

Huff: We didn't have any badges or anything to mark us. We were soon able to go out and shop and do what we wanted.

RL: Well, in one sense, it seems to me the Japanese didn't need badges because by race and color Caucasians stood out.

Huff: Yes. There were still quite a lot of Germans they weren't about to apprehend. But one restriction was that we weren't allowed outside the walls. They had guards there. And at various parts of the city--maybe it was between the Tartar city and the Chinese city; there was a wall there, of course,--they had soldiers posted with hypodermic needles. [Chuckle] Heaven knows what went into our arms! They'd just reach out sometimes [gestures as if giving a shot].

RL: Really?

Huff: Yes. They didn't want any American bacteria. [Laughter]

RL: What an extraordinary thing! I'd never heard of it. Did you ever have any ill effects from them?

Huff: No. It was probably water. It was probably just a show of superior Japanese science. [Chuckle] I don't know.

The Move to Wei-hsien Internment Camp, March, 1943

Huff: The reason why we weren't interned immediately was because either Pearl Harbor came sooner than it was expected, or the Japanese made their plans for preparing internment camps later than they should have. All those people in North China and Manchuria were to be sent to a Presbyterian missionary compound in Wei-hsien, Shantung province, and it took until March of '43 to have it ready. So, we were in Peking until then, and then we were sent down to the camp.

RL: You speak of it as though you were taking BART to San Francisco! Were there any options available to people? Did people attempt to leave Peking, or was it impossible?

Huff: There were no real options there, though one American banker got away. In camp, there was an escape.

Before we left the city, the chairman of the American community--we had formed a kind of loose association--William Christian, the head of the B.A.T. [British American Tobacco Co.] at that time, gave us all rather elaborate questionnaires to fill out. We knew we were going into camp, but hadn't yet gone. One of the questions was: If you were on a priority list for evacuation from camp, would you give up your place to a person who was ill or very old? I said, "Yes," and I have no reason to think I was on a priority list, that I would have been evacuated.

While we were in camp, one ship, the Gripsholm, left from Tsingtao, September of '43, six months after we'd been interned, and Americans and some English people were repatriated. Anyway, I believe they took a captured French ship from Shanghai, and then in Goa were transhipped according to what their destinations were. I remained throughout the war, and my prison number was U.S.A. No. 3-157.

RL: What were you allowed to take with you into camp?

Huff: I think for clothing and such things there was a weight limit. I took one rather large bag or a small trunk. I could carry it, more or less. And then from Peking, and this was a better allowance than people from the interior had, we were allowed fifty books, fifty volumes, and I took fifty Chinese books.

Huff: One of Mr. Ferguson's daughters, Mary, was among those watching the "enemies" being marched to the railway station for the ride to Wei-hsien. She saw that I was faint and took my suitcase to carry it herself. A Japanese officer dashed up to forbid the act, but she won the argument.

RL: How did you select your fifty books?

Huff: Most of them I selected for reading around what had become my main subject of interest, but some I selected for just keeping my hand into classical Chinese. The older books from which even to this day so many literary allusions are taken--the Book of History, and Poetry, and things like that--I took those.

I learned quite a lot of Chinese in camp because I had to figure out not only the text and commentaries--but everything else. I didn't have any tutor to go to! [Chuckle]

RL: Did you own a dictionary at that time?

Huff: Well, a Chinese dictionary, yes, I did. That red one over there [points to book on desk] I took with me to camp. And I noticed a book I was looking at the other day that has to do with the bit I'm writing--I noticed that I wrote on that "Wei-hsien," so I had that copy.

Raymond de Jaegher, the well known Catholic priest, lecturer, and author, was there. When in September of '43 the Japanese told the group of Catholic priests that they might return to their parishes, Father de Jaegher was one of eleven who elected to remain. He and I exchanged lessons. He spoke perfect Chinese. He would speak with me for an hour, and then I'd read classical texts with him for an hour. It was fun.

Living Arrangements in Camp

RL: What were conditions like in the camp when you got there?

Huff: Well, all of the rows of rooms that had been middle school students' dormitories had been made into two-bed or two-bunk rooms for couples. A few slightly larger ones were set aside for couples with children. Some floors of the hospital and the big school building, the main

Huff: school building, which was three stories, I think and an attic, were for single people. I was in a room with seven. The most extraordinary group! [Laughter]

RL: Who were they? Do you remember?

Huff: Oh! How could I forget? Peggy Mosely, the wife or former wife of a British socialist. What was his name?

RL: Oswald Mosely?

Huff: It couldn't have been Oswald, I think. It must have been a relative of his. Anyway, Peggy always bragged about his powers of political agitation. She was a very handsome woman, much given to sleeping in the churchyard with assorted Italians after they were sent up from Shanghai to Wei-hsien and then bragging about it. [Laughter]

Then there was Mrs. Ryan, an Englishwoman who had been brought to Peking many years ago, fifty years before, I think, as a governess for a Belgian family. She was of the earth, earthy! Oh! Her expressions were beyond belief. She couldn't have used them as a governess; she wouldn't have kept her job.

Her daughter, who was reported to be a Tientsin prostitute, continued her trade, I believe, rather discreetly though, along with a Russian friend of hers who was of the same persuasion or profession. I mentioned Mrs. Ryan.

Mrs. Jowett. Everybody called her "Jauwet," and she'd say, "My name is Jōwett, and all men know it." She was the widow of-- would it have been the grandson of Benjamin? Probably. He had been in the British consulate in Tientsin, and she had stayed on living there after his death. She was given sometimes, when she felt in a state of uncontrollable abandon, to dancing around the room when the stove was warm, in the middle of the room, in her what we would call--not Doctor Denton's--Munsingwear, long underwear. [Laughter]

She had two pet phrases. When something pleased her, which was rare, she would say, "Commendable conduct!" And when someone annoyed her, which was often, she'd say, "I'll thank you to keep a civil tongue in your head."

Huff: And then I was the sixth person. And the seventh--oh, the seventh!--was Madame Malisheff, a Russian abortionist from Tientsin. [Laughter] An intellectual group in that room! She had conned the Japanese into letting her bring her instruments. She was the only one I knew of in camp who'd brought a wardrobe trunk, and you remember those old trunks, how they opened out? One side was full of instruments, surgical instruments, and the other side had her clothing and things in it.

RL: Were her services needed in camp?

Huff: Oh, yes. She did very well. Of course, mostly people didn't have money, but she didn't especially want money. She wanted to be paid in jewelry. It was she who wore only pea-green bloomers and a bandana on her cleaning days. At the start of the second winter I came upon her one day when she had got a particularly hot, coal-ball fire going, and I praised it. She said, "Miss Hoff, last year this stove fright me, this year I fright this stove."

RL: How did you accommodate yourself to these roommates?

Huff: Oh, I don't know; I didn't find it difficult. Some of their habits were a little annoying, as you can imagine they were. They weren't all of them really the most fastidious people. It was hard to be in the camp; you had to work at it. But they were all cooperative.

Camp Chores

Huff: For example, there were seven of us in the room, so each of us took one day, chose a day--I think mine was Wednesday--to be responsible for cleaning the room. It took two or three hours. We always mopped the floor. There was so much dust there; every day we had to mop the floor. And in the winter months, when we were issued small potbellied stoves, that person was also responsible for starting a fire. That's very difficult with coal balls. Well, making the coal balls. Have you ever made a coal ball?

RL: No. How do you do it?

Huff: The Japanese furnished us with coal dust. I had never seen coal dust before. A great mountain of coal dust; it would have filled

Huff: this room. And then we dug clay. We didn't know the proportions when we started out the first year. We used water--you can imagine the chilblains we had--and mixed clay and coal dust. We started out with one-to-one, I think, proportions, but we became extremely clever, so that in the end some of us were able to make burnable coal balls that were seven parts of clay to one of coal dust. It made a very hot fire once you got it started [chuckle]--there was no paper or anything--you can imagine that the clay, once hot, retained the heat.

RL: What did you start it with?

Huff: Just chips of coal ball. And you banked the fire at night. It sometimes went out, but with good luck it wouldn't, and then you wouldn't have to use a matchstick to start it in the morning.

RL: What did you bank it with? Coal dust?

Huff: Yes. Wet coal dust.

We discovered another interesting thing there in building fires, that wet fuel burns very well. Hello, Percy. [To cat] Where have you been?

RL: What other work did you do?

Huff: I was in the Kitchen 3 storeroom as long as it lasted, and I even slept there [chuckle], and then I was merged into the staff of the biggest of the kitchens, Kitchen 1, which had started out as Tientsin and was gradually enlarged to feed people from almost anywhere.

Camp Conditions and Government

Huff: The Japanese, along with not bringing in sufficient electricity for a long time, never brought in water except in a vast room supplied with shower heads but without partitions. All the fixtures were in and the plumbing pipes. [Chuckle] We had to use a community outhouse so you can imagine what latrine duty was! We did have a small bulb, a ten-watt bulb, I guess, in each room.

RL: Where did you get your water from?

Huff: An outdoor spigot.

RL: Terrible. And how was the quantity of the food? Was it enough for health?

Huff: The first year, certainly, I think it was, and I think it probably was fresh enough. The Japanese, of course, naturally exploited the surrounding territory--sweet potatoes, Chinese cabbage, peanuts. Meat was never very much or very good, and toward the end, the second winter, the supply of food had deteriorated, as the tide was turning, I think--we didn't know it--against the Japanese.

Oh, I can remember sitting at one of those deal tables in Kitchen 1, in the Kitchen 1 dining room, and peeling, taking off as little as we possibly could, onions and sweet potatoes that had been frozen. And I can remember a sweet little Anglican priest, working in one of the butcher shops, coming out to stand in the sun for a minute one day when I happened to be passing, and he said, "Look at my boutonnière," [gesturing on the shoulder], and it was five liver flukes.

RL: Ugh!

Huff: Well, what could you do but laugh? You know, if you became grim about it, and some people were--of course, some people made a great thing out of their suffering.

One of the nicer things about camp was the flower garden that Mary Wright and I shared. I don't remember how we came by the original seeds, but we collaborated on planting a row of the largest varieties of morning glories along the western wall of camp. She and I both took our wash water out--it was soapy--but the morning glories thrived!

Then, Mary had a night-blooming plant, a cereus, by the Wrights' quarters. It was quite lovely and people would come in the evenings to admire it and sit and talk. Mary adored flowers; even in Peking she had lots of them.

RL: Have you seen or had described to you the experiences of the Japanese-Americans in their relocation camps in this country? I wonder how their conditions compared with your internment camp?

Huff: I don't know much about it. Years and years ago, Isabel Jackson, head of Documents, as the department was then called, decided that

Huff: she might transfer to the E.A.L. [East Asiatic Library] such a file as she had, and it was fairly extensive, of the small newspapers that were issued in some of those camps, relocation centers. The whole collection is now in The Bancroft Library. Much of the writing was in English, and the scene was in the United States.

Yoshi Nakamura and her family, of course, were sent, I think to one in Utah [Topaz]. She never wanted to talk about it, and I didn't press her at all, and she said, anyway, that the worst thing was losing what you had. That was awful--the confiscation of everything and the closing down of their businesses. She said as far as the conditions in the camps went, she was sure that they were very pleasant compared to those in the Japanese camps, and I imagine they were.

From what I've heard, the conditions in Japanese military camps were indescribable. Compared to those, ours was nothing.

RL: Were you in physical fear of what your Japanese guards might do?

Huff: No, except for the time when Laurance Tipton and Arthur Hummel, Jr. jumped over the wall.

RL: I read Laurance Tipton's book.* Tell me about that escape from the perspective of the people inside, or rather your perspective.

Huff: I knew that something was up. I knew that something was up with Tip, because I'd been in charge of the Kitchen 3 storeroom for a brief period, as long as there was a Kitchen 3--we lost it quite soon--and Tip came in to me one day and sat talking in, I thought, a rather aimless way, and then he held out a thermos bottle. Everybody had a thermos bottle. He handed it to me and said, "This is empty." I said, "What do you want me to put in it?" And he said, "Sugar." I filled it with sugar, and I knew something was afoot. Sugar was hard to come by in camp.

And it turned out, then, soon he and Arthur jumped over the wall with Father de Jaegher's help--I think Father de Jaegher had

*Laurance Tipton, Chinese Escapade, London, MacMillan Co., Ltd., 1949.

Huff: helped plan it--and joined the guerrillas, and he was with them, as you know, the rest of the war.

Well, it made the Japanese absolutely furious, and so they did two things. The rest of the time we had to have roll call not once a day but twice. That was an awful bore! And the other thing they did was to put an electric wire, a live one, around the top of the wall that surrounded the camp.

RL: You mentioned when we were talking before we started taping about an electric wire which I thought ran through the camp and where a child was killed.

Huff: Oh, that was just a lighting wire, such as we have on the streets, and it wasn't well installed, I suppose, and probably a support had snapped. It was hanging down in a loop sort of, and like any boy, he just jumped up and caught it. It was Paul Thompson's brother.

RL: I remember Mary Wright telling me how she had unripped a sweater to reclaim the yarn, and painfully knitted Arthur a pair of socks for Christmas. She wasn't very domestically oriented and didn't enjoy using her hands. Then, the socks were eaten that very same night by rats.

Huff: My word!

They lived in one of those little rooms. Well, I don't remember that. I suppose there must have been rats though. I saw them from time to time in the kitchen. I'd never seen one in my room.

RL: Did you have an internal government?

Huff: Yes.

RL: How did that function?

Huff: There was a committee. I don't know how it was chosen. It certainly wasn't chosen by vote! [Laughter] I think it was people who thought they'd be good at it. It was a good group. The head of it was a very pleasant, very firm Englishman with the most remarkable name of Lawless. [Laughter] It wasn't appropriate for him. Injustices and things fancied among inmates, I think, were taken to the group. I think also when we thought something that should be provided

Huff: wasn't being as well provided by the Japanese as it should be, I think it was only Mr. Lawless, probably, who could see the commandant. And then everyone except the old, sick, and young children under fifteen or so--the children got off pretty well--we were all assigned jobs.

RL: What about medical care?

Huff: Let's see. Dr. Harold H. Loucks and Dr. Hamilton from P[eking] U[niversity] M[edical] C[ollege] were both repatriated in September, 1943. They were active for the first six months. An English surgeon remained, and I think two nurses, and they put together one floor of the hospital with what they could salvage of instruments, in one place, and a ward that held a few beds in the other.

One English nurse was from Yorkshire and was barely intelligible to Americans. The other one was prim and proper; when I remarked to her that using summer dinner jackets in place of physicians' coats was sensible but for the nurses to press them with flatirons--flatirons heated on coal ball fires--was not, she replied, "We must keep up our standards."

There were exactly as many deaths in camp as births, and I think the deaths, except for the boy who was electrocuted, were all natural, the elderly people. It was just too much for them with the comparative cold and the comparatively meager diet.

RL: Did you ever have any relationships with the Japanese guards that were more than custodial?

Huff: No. There probably were people in camp who spoke some Japanese who may have formed acquaintanceships with them. The only time I had anything to do with one was when I was talking with the Irwins, and there was a strict rule that you had to be in your own room when the power went off at ten o'clock. I had lost track of time, and so had they, and suddenly the lights went off. I dashed back to my seven-bed dormitory room, and a guard caught me, shook me up and barked and screamed at me, but didn't hurt me. He let me go on.

Two and a half years in camp. It's a fairly large chunk out of one's life. Bob Hightower always said he liked it. Well, to each his own taste! He was there only six months.

RL: What did he like about it?

Huff: I have no idea. He was a cook. Bob is a very good, a very accomplished cook, and I think he enjoyed taking what was essentially rather plain and often poor ingredients and making something unusual and interesting.

RL: How did everybody get on? You were there with the Irwins [Dick and Betty], as I recall, and the Wrights, and Arthur Hummel, Jr. for a while. Was there a community amongst the scholars, or was there some friction?

Huff: [Pauses to think] Well, the Irwins--Dick took a dislike to the Wrights. They lived next door to each other.

Arthur had made an arrangement, on the grounds of health, by which he was sent once a month a side of bacon from Tientsin; having no carving knife, he always borrowed Dick's, and he returned it, not only without a rasher of bacon but also without having washed the knife. Too bad!

But I used to read Chinese with Dick. We used to read modern books, such as one by Lu Hsün. Dick was interested in the later periods. We used to read modern Chinese together, and it seems to me that Arthur and I read earlier texts. He was already into Buddhism--earlier periods.

We didn't have as much strength, of course, as time wore on. I think we tended to do more just sort of, when we had a free moment, lie alone and read.

RL: You say your health suffered as a result of that experience.

Huff: Well, of course, I think it does if you are malnourished. I wasn't so frightfully young, but when I came out of camp--October, '45-- I was frightfully thin, less than 100 pounds. I don't remember exactly what I was. There had been no proper dental care, and that's why I'm in the process of losing my teeth, I think, now.

Dr. William G. Donald, Jr. told me, and I hadn't learned this before--I've been seeing him only for three or four years, I guess--that the lack of food for a protracted time undoubtedly explains the condition of my liver. It's not bad, but there is something along the bottom of it, so that when you're examined, you shouldn't feel it, but I jumped when he touched it. He says

Huff: it's undoubtedly from that period of not enough food. He said drinking doesn't help it, so I'd better stop. [Laughter] I practically have, but I thought later Good heavens! I'm pretty old to become a Puritan! [Laughter] I think he is one, definitely. No, I can't complain. I think he is a good doctor, but I'm afraid he's a Puritan.

War's End: "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning!"

Huff: The war had been over, I think, for two or three days when we became aware of it. We weren't told by the commandant or the guards, and we didn't know until one morning we heard a plane flying too low over the field next to camp and looked up and it was an American plane. It was an enormous plane from, I think, Okinawa, and it dropped seven parachutists in the field. They looked like boys to us. I don't know. They looked about fifteen; they may have been a little older. So, of course, that was it, and we stormed out the gate and into the field and welcomed them.

Supplies were dropped for them. We set aside rooms for them as offices and headquarters. Everybody went to bed early and slept. We were going to sleep forever, because we'd been getting up so early. We were going to sleep late, but the little boys [chuckle] had been busy all night setting up a loudspeaker system, and all of us, promptly at 6:30, were awakened by the, we thought, far from beautiful strains of "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning." [Laughter] Is that the correct name of it?

RL: I think so.

Huff: From "Oklahoma," I think.

RL: Right.

Huff: We had never heard the music, of course; it had come out during the war. Everybody was absolutely livid! And I think it was Mrs. Jowett who went immediately to the young Americans and told them precisely how discourteous, how unkind, how thoughtless such people could be. [Laughter] The poor fellows! They were used to getting up at 6:30, and it just never occurred to them that we wouldn't be.

One thing we didn't have in camp was liquor. When we saw that American plane dropping those beautiful little boy parachutists

Huff: onto the field next to the camp, I think every soul in the camp snatched up anything that he thought the Chinese would want. Of course, the Chinese peasants just had been waiting--they came in by the thousands--and people dashed, some with mattresses, some with blankets, some with clothing, dashed to the wall and exchanged it for pai-karrh.

RL: For what?

Huff: Pai-karrh, that very strong Chinese drink. There were some frightful hangovers, and they weren't just from drinking; they were from eating. We should have known better.

The Americans started sending in food by parachute in big planes which were never meant for parachutes, and lots of the crates crashed in the fields. But one of the things was chocolate, and, of course, we'd had nothing rich. And I remember one of the first rations of that food--it was all done very systematically; probably Mr. Lawless had a hand in that--Betty [Irwin] and I each received a bar of Hershey chocolate. They used to be five cents; it's probably a ten-cent bar now. We ate the whole thing. Oh, I'd never been so sick in my life! [Laughter]

Then food supplies started; well, regular ones. I think I told you that we'd occasionally had Red Cross parcels before.

Getting Back to Peking, October, 1945

Huff: Then the American officers formed groups of us according to destinations after camp. Some wanted to come home, to Europe or America. Some wanted to go back to the Chinese cities they had come from, as I did. I wanted to go back to Peking. Some wanted to go to Tsingtao, some to Tientsin. So, in their very efficient way, those sweet little fellows made all the plans to truck us-- I guess they were trucks, not buses--the approximately three miles from the camp into the town of Wei-hsien, which was something of a railroad center. [Chuckle] Oh, the innocence! Everyone said to them, "It will never work." Of course, it never would have. We would still have been there.

Every morning, early, eight o'clock or so, a group of fifty or more people would be trucked into Wei-hsien, only to discover morning after morning after morning that guerrillas had blown up

Huff: the tracks. [Laughter] Well, I'm sure Mrs. Jowett was among those who expressed their feelings on the subject! And we kept saying, "You'll have to fly us out of here."

RL: Who were the guerrillas?

Huff: Chinese.

RL: Yes, but do you have any idea which faction?

Huff: No. The sort of people Tip [Laurance Tipton] joined up with. He and Arthur Hummel, Jr., as you know, came back to camp soon after the end of the war, from the guerrillas. No, I know so little about that aspect of Chinese life. In Peking we weren't very much aware of it, of course, and it wasn't the sort of thing that was most publicized in the papers.

RL: How was your morale as the days went by and you were still in camp after the war was over?

Huff: All I can remember is ill-concealed exasperation. [Laughter] We all had so many friends that we hadn't seen for a long time, and, well, just the idea of going into a restaurant, you know, was almost intoxicating. Just the vision of it. The war was over, but it didn't make much difference except we had better food.

Finally, in the middle of October, I and a group of twenty to thirty people were flown up to Peking in a rather small army plane with bucket seats. There a big truck, an enormous open truck, met the plane, and we piled into the truck and were taken and dropped off around the city where we wanted to go.

And Peking--it was almost like Chinese New Year's for the crowds. Streets were lined as far as you could see and as deep as they could be with people cheering.

RL: Cheering whom? You?

Huff: Yes. The Japanese prisoners were free; the prisoners of Japan were free. We all wept. More than two and a half years of that sort of thing and sudden emancipation, it was too much, and the Chinese were so happy.

RL: Who looked after your possessions during the war?

Huff: Most of my possessions, of course, were books. A few, small art objects. Two Chinese friends divided my books and kept them in their houses. They took them out under the cover of night and kept them for me.

RL: And your little apartment, or your living quarters--were you able to move back into those?

Huff: No, because Tirzah Bullington, who had rented that beautiful compound and, in turn, rented that one building in it to me, had been repatriated on the Gripsholm. I moved into a very, very inexpensive place on the west side of town where foreigners, Westerners, had never, or seldom, lived, and I was the object of much curiosity among the natives! [Chuckle] Tung Yang-ma-ying, East Stables Alley. [Laughter] And there I lived, chiefly to finish my thesis, until the following June [1946].

RL: Were you under much pressure from your family to come straight home?

Huff: Not from my father. Mother urged me to come. Mother never lost a chance to be dramatic. I think I was the only native of Urbana who was caught in that kind of situation [laughter], and I think Mother made the most of it, though she knew nothing of it, of course.

The Japanese didn't worry much about mail that came in, and the war was almost over before I received my father's cable telling me of the birth of my niece in '43.

There was no pressure from Harvard.

RL: What was Peking like immediately after the war? Were you aware of the political difficulties in China, the conflict between the Kuomintang and the Communists?

Huff: Oh, yes. The people talked about it. My Chinese friends told me of it. I didn't sense that there was yet great fear. I didn't feel any, and there was no overt evidence in the streets of Peking; at least to me there wasn't. I daresay if I had been younger and had among my associates Chinese college students that I would have learned a great deal more.

RL: Was life better for you and your Chinese associates after the war in that short period '45-'46 than it had been under the Japanese occupation when you first came to Peking?

Huff: We certainly felt freer. You do. Even though the Japanese on the whole, except for keeping us inside the walls, hadn't really been troublesome, their presence was always evident on the streets. There were lots of soldiers around town. And to do anything out of the way, especially to go a mile out of the town [chuckle], you had to see the Japanese official, who was called the consul. He, in fact, was running the city with his staff.

The Japanese were leaving, of course, as fast as the Americans could get them back to Japan in '45. I don't think I ever went to the stations or any place where I would have seen the groups of them leaving. Francis Cleaves was intimately involved with that operation.

RL: Was he? I didn't know that.

Huff: As a naval officer, he was sent to Tientsin and he--what word did they use?--processed, I think, lots of Japanese being returned.

They were allowed so many pounds, I think, of luggage, and I can remember Francis telling amusing stories and sometimes pathetic stories of efforts of some to bribe him.

RL: What was the pathetic connotation? When you tell me that, I make the perhaps false assumption that they were trying to get Chinese loot out of China.

Huff: No, no. They were trying to take a few extra pounds. Well, perhaps things they'd acquired. Some things as they did in Korea. No, pathetic in the sense of a person who really had very little, but wanted to take an extra few pounds of something offering Francis something, an inexpensive book or something, you know, that he had no use for, something that that person had thought enough of to acquire. I have a book upstairs, a small art book on Tōji, on the monastery and temple in Kyoto, and he said he couldn't refuse it the way it was presented to him. He gave it to me, because Francis isn't interested in art.

RL: Was your impression that--"ordinary Chinese," really an unusuable concept--were better off after the war than before, or didn't it make much difference? How much evidence of acute poverty was there in the streets of Peking, for example?

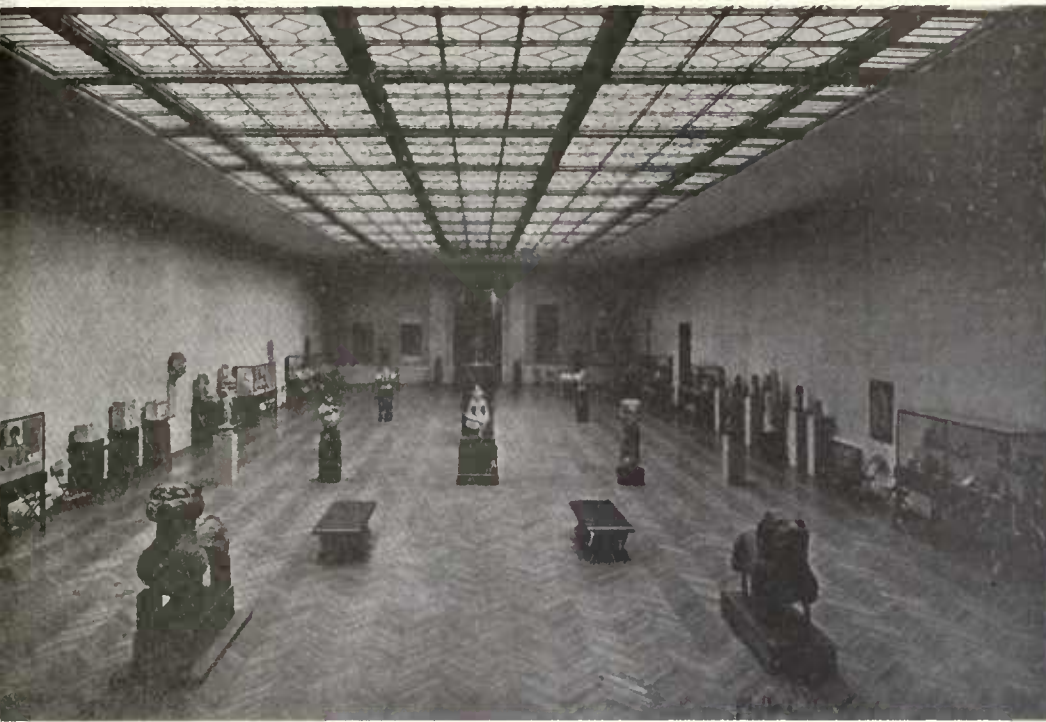
Huff: I don't think there was very much change, and, of course, there was a group of Chinese, most of them not by our standards at all

- Huff: comfortable in their circumstances, who had worked for the Japanese, and, of course, those people lost their work when the Japanese were repatriated. I talked with one. That was very sad, and that was a new group. General poverty in the poorer districts, I had the feeling it was just about the same.
- RL: Did people who had worked for the Japanese suffer the same sorts of troubles as, for example, French collaborators with the Nazis?
- Huff: I don't think so. I think that it wasn't quite the same; "worked for" only in the sense of being servants, being very minor office employees, that kind of thing. There must have been some who collaborated. I never heard of those. [Telephone interruption]

There was in some ways quite a different atmosphere, for me, at least, partly because there were few foreigners. They had begun to return. They did begin to return in that year, but usually not ones that I had known before.

Six Selfful Months with Tutors

- Huff: I have several times in my life taken a vow of doing remarkable things like not going out for six months in order to finish something, but usually the vow was broken. [Chuckle] But those last months in Peking were the most selfful and, I must say, not unhappy, months of my life. I really just did nothing but meet with the same tutors and translate things.
- RL: You said, "selfful"?
- Huff: Yes. Is that in the dictionary? Maybe it isn't. We used to use it in college all the time. We preferred it to "selfish." We thought it meant more. [Laughter]
- RL: Did you get any guidance from Harvard, or were you working strictly on your own with your tutors?
- Huff: Strictly on my own.
- RL: Did you see much of Mary and Arthur Wright in Peking? And what were they doing?



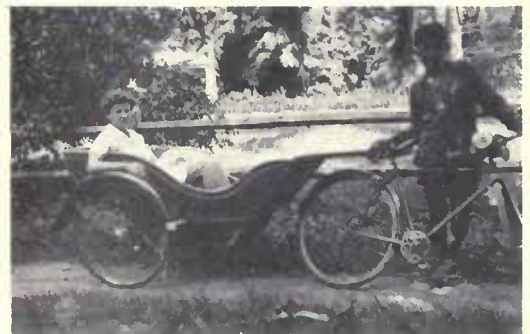
Chinese Exhibition, Mills College Art Gallery. Fall 1934.



House in Peking. 194



Japanese signs near Peking. 1941.



Elizabeth Huff in Indo-China, ca. 1940.



Achilles Fang



Father de Jaegher with Mme. Chiang Kai-shek in Formosa, ca. 1952.

Huff: Soon after we returned [to Peking], Mary was appointed by the Hoover Institute, with what title I don't know, and given a large amount of money--I don't know the amount--to buy books on modern Chinese history before she returned, and she made several trips and bought lots of books in North China, and, so the story went, on her way home stopped in Taiwan, went into a bookstore that had almost nothing but--and those are valuable now--books printed in the '20s and '30s on Chinese politics and history, and said, "I'll take the whole shop." So, it was sent to Hoover. [Laughter] Isn't that like Mary? I admire it.

RL: Yes. The story I heard much later was that the Wrights stayed on in China, to the great unhappiness of Mary's family particularly, in order to buy books and work on their theses.

Huff: Yes. Arthur's was near completion, I think. Mary had chosen her topic some years before, because I remember certain books she bought were very expensive to support her research on that one period. She wrote about the 1860s, the T'ung-chih reign. Finally, I think she took two years off to finish it, and that was when Lienche Tu Fang took Mary's place at Hoover.

RL: When did you return to the States?

Huff: In June, 1946, Betty Irwin and I went to the American consulate to make arrangements for passage home. Dick Irwin was farther away from the end of his dissertation than I had been, and he chose to stay on a little longer.

Let's see. Betty and I were flown to Shanghai, and there we boarded the converted but hardly converted troopship, the General Meigs. Oh, it took a tremendously long time, it seemed. We reached San Francisco on July 16, Betty very, very ill. The ship's doctor was a dreadful little chap who was intoxicated most of the time and had failed to put in supplies.

So, I stayed in San Francisco until Dick could come--Louise Shoup introduced me to Ruth Teiser,* who generously put me up in her pleasant apartment on Filbert Street. (It was Ruth who introduced me to an author who became one of my favorites, Ronald Firbank, and it was Ruth who asked me how I felt about singing

*Interviewer, editor, Regional Oral History Office.

Huff: commercials. I could only say that I didn't know the phrase.)
I cabled Dick--and later went on to see my parents in Urbana and
then to Cambridge to finish up. I think my degree was final in
March. And, so, I started to work in Berkeley on April 15, '47.

RL: You make it sound so simple!

V BACK TO THE UNITED STATES; THE PH.D.; A NEW LIBRARIAN
AT A NEW LIBRARY

Orderly Cambridge and the "Lost" Thesis

RL: So you returned to Harvard in the fall of '46. Is that correct?

Huff: Let's see. It would have been very early fall. I stayed only briefly in Urbana, a week or two, I think, chiefly to agree to Mother's insistence that she buy me some acceptable apparel. [Chuckle] You can imagine the state of my clothing. I had nothing that I hadn't brought with me in '39 except some Chinese gowns, and they had been pretty well worn out in camp, and an Eisenhower jacket, and some useful, attractive articles that my sister sent me.

I remember I tried on a houndstooth suit that took my fancy, and Mother said to the clerk, "We'll take that." I said, "Not without asking the price!" Mother was not often one to ask the price about clothing in the later years when she could afford not to. The clerk said, "It's fifty dollars." I said, "Mother, I will not go around the streets of Cambridge or any other streets wearing so much money on my back."

RL: Who won?

Huff: Mother always won. [Laughter]

RL: How did Harvard seem to you after your experiences, and how were you received by the faculty there and your student colleagues?

Huff: Oh, everybody was extremely friendly. Most of the people who had been students when I was had finished and gone. The faculty at the

Huff: [Harvard-Yenching] Institute remained much the same. Mr. Elisséeff was there and Mr. Ware was there. Francis Cleaves and Bob--well, James Robert--Hightower had both joined the staff. Langdon Warner was still there. Very cordial. Harvard seemed absolute heaven to me. [Chuckle] It seemed so orderly. I've always liked Cambridge.

I had to leave as soon as I could because I had to start earning money.

RL: Did you have any trouble with your thesis?

Huff: When I came back to Cambridge with the translation of Shih hsüeh, James Ware had something perilously close to a tantrum: "Chinese studies in the West were not ready for such hard translating," and it is hard, certainly in classical Chinese, and he wouldn't accept it. It came to two or three hundred pages in my manuscript.

RL: What did he mean by "...were not ready"?

Huff: He just thought we had to have more and more French Sinology-- people like Pelliot writing five hundred pages on the meaning of one particle in classical Chinese. There just weren't enough learned books on the language, on the early texts, I think, is what he meant.

RL: So, he was accusing you, in a sense, of building walls without bricks, is that right?

Huff: Something like that, yes. Or bricks without straw. [Laughter]

I said, "You really mustn't blame me, Mr. Ware. Mr. Elisséeff said it was all right, and all my correspondence while I was abroad was with Mr. Elisséeff." He was the one that was giving the money, after all, or had control of it. And, so, Mr. Ware accepted it.

I've never redone it. It should have been published, but not as it stood. As it stood, I think it was all right. I could add lots of things now, of course; I know more. But Francis Cleaves was made one of the readers. I think they had two or three. And you've probably not read any of his writing.

RL: No, I haven't.

Huff: I can't describe his English. It's, of course, grammatically perfect and almost impossible to read. It's so pedestrian. It's the writing of a confirmed purist in linguistics, totally without style.

Huff: He went through my thesis and reduced it to that, reducing me to tears, I think. Eddie [Edwin Oldfather] Reischauer tried to support me, but you couldn't get anywhere against Francis. One example: as in other languages, in Chinese, of course, one character may be used in different meanings or shades of meanings. I translated the word hsüeh, which means "study" or "studying"--it can mean many things--I think on the first page as "studies." Francis made me go through that whole thesis and translate it that way every time it occurred. [Laughter] Oh!

Anyway, it's been lost, I'm happy to say.

RL: Lost?

Huff: Yes. The last I heard it was. Mr. Elisséeff told me. He asked me for my copy. I said, "I never had a copy. I left the ribbon and carbon with you when I left Cambridge." And he said, "Well, I don't know what happened to the carbon. The ribbon we deposited in the Radcliffe library or archives if they have such things." And it was the only copy with characters; it had thousands of characters in it.

Not long after Achilles Fang came to Harvard, he wanted it as assigned reading for one of his classes, and we shouldn't have let him have it, and Radcliffe shouldn't have either, but it's been lost. [Laughter] Well, that's the last I've heard! I don't know.

RL: How terrible!

Huff: It seems rather a waste!

RL: It must be somewhere, one of those two copies.

Huff: I said I didn't have a carbon. I have a second carbon that has no characters in it, and I could--whew, it would take months to track down all those characters, because there were whole paragraphs of quoting. The good old Harvard tradition. It was a Francis Cleaves thesis; it was nothing if not precise. It could be published, of course, without characters; they aren't absolutely necessary.

Job Hunting, 1947 Style

RL: What were your hopes for a job at that time?

Huff: I secretly hoped for a teaching job. But, as it turned out, I learned of three open positions that I might be thought to qualify for. Mr. Elisséeff offered me a job on the Harvard [Chinese] dictionary which died prematurely. Well, it should have. This last month when I went back [to Cambridge], I wished sometimes that I had taken that because the Institute was quite benign, really, and I probably would have been kept on in some capacity even after the dictionary ended.

The second opening was head of the East Asiatic Library, as it was then called, at Columbia. I went down in one of the worst blizzards that the East has had, in February of '47, to be interviewed by Mr. [Carl M.] White, the librarian at Columbia, in the most spacious office with several large couches, as I remember it, and a desk that had nothing on it but a pen and pencil set. He was very pleasant, and when I left, and it was a blizzard, he came as far as the outside door of the library. I had told him that I was also inquiring into the third position, which was the one here [Berkeley]. He said, "Well, good-bye. Columbia Library has been in competition with California before, and Columbia always wins."

But I had asked him what the salary might be and what the range was. I don't know what made me so practical; I was just in need of money. He said, "You might get up to as much as five thousand dollars," and even then that seemed awfully little.

So, I had written a letter of inquiry to Mr. [Donald] Coney and when I returned to Cambridge I had a telegram from him offering me this job, and I took it.

RL: Was that an advertised job, or had you heard of it on the grapevine?

Huff: I am not an eavesdropper, but I overheard of both of those, the two library jobs, as I was walking through the Institute reading room one day. Charles Sidney Gardner was talking to a student, and he said, "You know, there are library openings at both Columbia and Berkeley." He then talked with me about the Columbia job. He wanted me very much to take it because he said, "Columbia has a better library."

Huff: Well, at that time, I think it did. Within a few years it didn't, by any means, but I think it did at that time.

RL: Were you helped by the faculty in this? Now there are a number of institutional means of trying to place students. How was it when you were looking?

Huff: I think there was no machinery, at least for the women students. There could have been some for the men. I may have had to request letters of support or recommendation, but I don't remember. I'm sure the faculty would have written them if I had asked.

I wasn't a particularly distinguished student as an undergraduate or--it wasn't until that last winter in Cambridge that I was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. [Chuckle] Isn't that strange? I was so taken aback. That must have been machinery, but I don't know whose.

RL: I thought that was an undergraduate honor.

Huff: Yes. [Chuckle] I'm perhaps the only living example. I don't know. I always thought so too.

RL: Well, a neighbor of mine, Ella Hagar, was made an honorary Phi Beta on her seventy-fifth birthday!

Do you feel that being a woman limited your opportunities at that time for getting a university appointment, a faculty appointment?

Huff: I felt it. I don't know whether it--I didn't do any investigating to be sure that my feeling was valid. I think you had to be much more aggressive than I am. I think some of the more aggressive women did receive better appointments. Well, for example, Mary Haas here. [Professor of Linguistics] I was quite astonished when I heard she's my age, a little older. She sat talking with me in Room 415 on the day that I met her. I asked how one went about studying American Indian languages. Her complete reply was, "We linguists have our own methods."

RL: Well, that brings us to the library appointment, the East Asiatic Library at Berkeley. Had you ever met Mr. Coney?

Huff: No, it was all done by mail. I hadn't met him. I really knew very little of this--I knew nothing of the Oriental

Huff: collection here, and I knew little enough of the [University] library, except that I had, of course, used it rather frequently when I was a student at Mills.

RL: So, your reactions. Were you generally pleased?

Huff: Yes. I was happy to come out, and I had quite a lot of luck. A friend was leaving a charming apartment on Highland Place, just a block from the campus, and I took that. It was in one of four apartment buildings in a complex owned by Mrs. J. Stitt Wilson, widow of Berkeley's first Socialist mayor. And apartments were hard to find. I met Mr. Coney and his two assistant librarians the day I came, I think, and found them very pleasant.

Two or three days later when I started work, I was given a desk in room 415 [Doe Library], where there were two large desks, two old typewriters, and a mimeograph machine. Professor Heine-Geldern sat at one desk [chuckle], typing all day long, and a rather ill-tempered, red-haired student ran the mimeograph machine almost all day long. On the bookshelves behind me were not books, but trophies such as skulls, prayer wheels, that Mr. [Ferdinand D.] Lessing had brought back from--I guess he'd collected them in Peking. They were Tibetan objects.

I started to work on April the fifteenth. Within a few weeks, I was deep enough into surveying the collection, which was distributed, of course, through the nine tiers of stacks in the Doe building, and making notes, and in a certain amount of correspondence already with dealers and others, that I felt as if I were in a straitjacket in 415.

State of the Oriental Collections at Berkeley in 1947

Huff: The Chinese collection was largely but not entirely the result of the gifts of Kiang Kang-hu, E.T. Williams, and John Fryer. The Fryer library was shelved in a seminar room on the fourth floor, 416, by terms of his will; it could never be moved from that room. And the Fryer collection was the largest by far of the three.

There were some periodicals that had been acquired by exchange, most of them on agriculture, from China. The Fryer Collection, which was a large part, was perfectly standard. That's one of its interests.

RL: "Standard" by whose standard?

Huff: The well educated not necessarily scholarly collector of the latter half of the 19th century. The four classes of books, you know--classics, history, philosophy, and belles lettres--all represented by standard works in block print, in inexpensive block print editions, which Mr. Fryer unfortunately had had bound Western style in Shanghai, and so eight or ten of what everyone calls a volume in Chinese is bound into one.

RL: Besides the four classes, what else did he have, or was that about it?

Huff: I doubt he had anything that couldn't have been classified--well, you can, I imagine, force anything into those [chuckle], as in most classification schemes.

RL: Yes. What was his interest in China? Was he a diplomat?

Huff: No. He is rumored to have gone to China as a missionary. His son, Charles Fryer, who is, I think, not living now, and who used to live in Southern California and come up every once in a while to the library, denied that so vehemently that I became suspicious. But it doesn't matter.

His father, John, got into school work, and for most of his career, and this is the part for which he became famous--I hope I can remember the term correctly--was made head of the translation bureau of Kiangnan Arsenal in Shanghai, which was an enormously important Chinese military establishment.

Fryer issued--it's a very rare book and I hope it's still in E.A.L.--a catalogue of all of the translations that had been made there. It's very, very interesting--much of it scientific, of course, a catalogue of 19th century books in German, French, and English translated into Chinese: so it gives the original titles and publication dates. But there were also--I think there was some fiction, some general works, history. And we have many of them, certainly more than another library in this country would have.

RL: And John Fryer was responsible, was he, for the titles selected for translation?

Huff: I think so, yes.

RL: What an interesting piece of intellectual history!

Huff: Yes, yes.

RL: And then the two other collectors, E.T. Williams and--

Huff: Kiang Kang-hu.

RL: Yes.

Huff: Kiang Kang-hu first. He had packed his library in Peking about thirty years earlier in large crates, and it was sent to San Francisco, and at least one of the crates fell into the sea or off the edge of the dock. [Laughter] It was waterlogged, and we tried awfully hard to save those books. They were still in the crates when I came. But we couldn't save many. You know, there was enough paste and stuff so that when they were wet, some of them just became like blocks.

He collaborated with Witter Bynner. This is a pirated edition that isn't very good.* [Shows book to interviewer] That's the way he spelled his name. That's still one of the best translations.

RL: [Looking at book] There's a lot of interest in Witter Bynner at the moment.

Huff: Is there?

RL: Yes. I met somebody the other day who is working on him. Did you know him?

Huff: No. He was living, I think, in Santa Fe. And nobody seems to know what happened to Kiang Kang-hu.

RL: Why did Kiang Kang-hu give his library to Berkeley?

Huff: I don't know. And the files of correspondence existing in the library when I came, about such matters, were woefully incomplete. I tried to extract all of the history that I could, but I think that was one point that was obscure to the end.

*300 Poems of the T'ang Dynasty, 618-906, English Translation with Chinese Text. A Translation with Notes and Commentary for the Study and Appreciation of the Chinese Poems. (Distributed by Paragon Book Gallery.) n.d.

RL: Who was he?

Huff: I don't know what he had been before. That prefatory matter might say something. Later he became a political figure, I'm told. Let's see. Dick Irwin wrote a letter to Witter Bynner asking him if he knew if Kiang Kang-hu was still living, or, if not, the date of his death. Witter Bynner replied that his death was presumably in the Orient, that he himself, though they had always kept up a correspondence after their collaboration, had never been able to get the information, but there was a good deal of general belief that he had been executed.

RL: About when?

Huff: Probably the '30s. It's possible that he's mentioned in here [Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period]. I don't know. [Tape off briefly]

RL: So, the biographical dictionary gives us no further information, except that he was born in 1883.

Huff: Yes.

RL: And then the third donor was E.T. Williams. What was his collection like?

Huff: That was also dispersed throughout the collection of Chinese books, and it was so small that we never brought it together, and it didn't have enough of a character, either by binding or topics or anything like that to be treated separately.

RL: What had Professor Williams done before he came to the Oriental Languages department here?

Huff: He'd been appointed by President Taft, president from 1909 to 1913, as minister to China. That was before the days of ambassadors from this country. When President Wilson succeeded Taft, Mr. Williams resigned. He had been, and I suppose continued to be, a supporter of the Chinese Republican cause, which became notable around 1911, I think.

Back in Washington, Williams was appointed head of the Far Eastern Department, as it was then called, in the Department of State.

Williams' daughter is still living.

RL: Really?

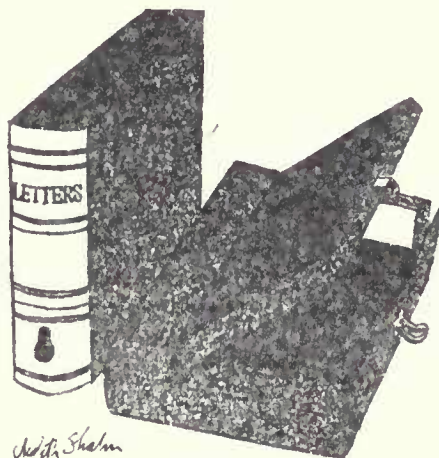
Huff: Maryon knows her. Her name is Glwadys. I think she worked in the library years ago, and she's been pointed out to me on Euclid. She has the most remarkable black hair I've ever seen, all done up [gesturing way up], but I think let down it must reach the floor.

The president of the University, Benjamin Ide Wheeler, persuaded E.T. Williams to come to Berkeley in 1918, which he did do, and where he taught Chinese history for a number of years.

Among his books was one--if my memory is correct, it was either one of the Chinese editions of the Bible, or of one of the Testaments--that was nicely furnished with a solander box, and it was the only one in the collection. As far as I know, it still is.

RL: What sort of box?

Huff: A solander box. S-o-l-a-n-d-e-r. Thought to have been named for a Swedish employee in the British Museum in the mid-19th century who devised that particular kind of box for the shelving of rare books. It's a box just comfortably larger--it has to be made separately, of course, for each book--than the book itself. It has a hinged lid which opens full, so that you can lift the book out carefully. It's usually made of heavy boards and has a generous, usually leather, spine, as it would be on the book, which is tooled with the author and title and so on. So, when it's shelved, it looks like a book.



- RL: How nice. And was this a standard Western approach to the problem of dealing with the thin Chinese volumes for a while?
- Huff: I've never seen it for Chinese books. Usually simply the cases, the t'ao, were made, much less expensive, of course. [Tape off briefly]
- RL: How about the Japanese collection?
- Huff: The Japanese books were largely in the fields of economics and history, I believe I'm right in saying. Books in the natural sciences were the great bore.
- RL: Why?
- Huff: Oh, learning the vocabulary for them I found very boring! [Laughter] Biology and so on, entomology, though nothing about insects ever bores me. I was happy to welcome issues of Mushi [insects].
- Evidently quite early on, perhaps as early as the '20s, the library, which had had for years a separate Exchange Division-- Gift and Exchange it was called, apart from the Acquisition or Order Division--had established exchange agreements with Japanese universities, and they sent California scientific publications; the law journal [California Law Review], still being published at Boalt; and, in later years, in order to receive more and some more expensive journals that they selected, the rag paper editions of--what would be the primary California State publication from Sacramento?
- RL: I don't know.
- Huff: It was expensive, yes. Legislative Reports, perhaps, something like that.
- RL: What was the Korean collection like?
- Huff: I don't think there was a Korean book!
- RL: And others? Mongol? Manchu? Tibetan? Thai?
- Huff: Yes. A few Mongol. More Manchu books. Mr. Lessing had collected those. Tibetan--quite a good collection of Tibetan in Buddhist texts.

RL: Where had that come from? Also Mr. Lessing?

Huff: Yes. I think he bought them in Peking.

Two Burmese volumes. [Chuckle] And perhaps as much as a shelf-full--the standard thirty-six-inch--of Siamese or Thai books.

It took me quite a lot of work, but I succeeded in persuading Mr. Coney [laughter] that Southeast Asia languages should not be kept together with the East Asia languages. So, in time, those were taken into the main library. I doubt if they were ever increased very much.

Mary Haas went to Siam one of those early years and was going to buy books, and I arranged for a transfer of funds, but she couldn't find good books. She bought a few of them, but she felt very sad about that.

And the Manchu, Mongol, and Tibetan were shelved in one of those special rooms after we moved to Durant, a rather obscure place, and the last I knew, they weren't yet catalogued. But, you see, after Mr. Lessing's death, there wasn't very much interest in them.

RL: Who had looked after the collections prior to your appointment? I have notes that Michael Hagerty and Diether von den Steinen had some responsibilities for the collection. Do you know what they did or how well qualified they were?

Huff: I think both were quite well qualified. I don't know precisely what their duties were, and so far as I know, neither was on the library payroll. I think they worked with the department.

RL: Of Oriental Languages?

Huff: Yes. Diether von den Steinen was no longer in Berkeley when I came; he was in Washington. Mr. Hagerty was in Berkeley, but rather aged, a perfectly delightful man. You know how he learned Chinese?

RL: No.

Huff: He was employed in one of the lesser, or less lofty, departments of the Library of Congress. He was a young man, very young, and

Huff: he happened to work standing next to a Chinese. He became fascinated with the language and more or less taught himself.

RL: Remarkable!

Huff: The Library of Congress had a collection already at that time. I don't know when Mr. Hagerty came to Berkeley. He published in the Harvard Journal what is still the best and possibly the only English translation of the Chu p'u, "Catalogue of Bamboo." He didn't have a large personal library, but he had tremendous files of notes, which he bequeathed to E.A.L., in two large metal filing cabinets, which stand high and are deep and hold manila folders. It would be fun to go through and organize those. They're fairly well organized.

RL: On what topics?

Huff: Mostly botanical, scientific. And, of, for example, character phrases whose exact meaning escaped him, and he'd suggest something and then cross it out and suggest something else and put a question mark. He was a very careful worker.

RL: In 1947, were there materials other than books in your charge?

Huff: At the time I was appointed, there were some maps. Not long after I came, Richard Teggart, who was then in charge of the map collection, sent me the entire and yet uncatalogued--unsorted, if you can imagine it--collection he had of maps that the United States Army had made from captured Japanese maps of the whole Pacific area. There are thousands of them; it seems to me 12,000.

RL: Good gracious!

Huff: [Laughter] Yes! Everything! Everything! Every detail. The whole country, half the country, a state or county within the country, the biggest city, the smallest village. Interesting! All black and white. I think the reproductions were certainly made by a photographic process. Different sizes, many of them very large, down to about this size [gestures].

RL: Very large meaning about three or four feet?

Huff: I should say three-by-four, possibly, the largest.

RL: Were these in Japanese--American reproductions of the Japanese maps?

Huff: Yes.

RL: Do you now think that even though they were in Oriental languages, they should have been assigned either to The Bancroft Library or a map division? Did this put an intolerable strain on the resources of the E.A.L.?

Huff: I never could afford to do anything with them, except certain summers when I had funds to employ students. That way I began, and I doubt it's been finished yet, sorting them and labeling the trays once one group was identified.

I think that proper cataloguing might not be necessary, since they were all from one source, if they were well sorted and sorted in detail. One tray has miscellaneous older maps in it.

The main task was to provide free space in the stacks where I could assemble, bring all the Chinese and all the Japanese materials together, and then undertake to do whatever. Everything needed to be done--binding, reclassifying.

The south side of the ninth tier had a barrier in the middle, and The Bancroft [Library] had eased its way in there through a back door. It needed space, and that was logical. I've forgotten what was on the near side to me of the barrier, but that space was cleared.

When I received my first assistant in June, Elizabeth McKinnon, she and I spent most of the summer pushing trucks through the stacks, picking up the Japanese books, and taking them up to the ninth tier. It was on the top [tier].

I had been given as an office, when the one I shared simply wasn't adequate, room 413. I can't tell you what it was known as.

RL: Please do!

Huff: Not with the tape going! [Laughter] Two desks were put in for Betty McKinnon and for me, and by fall, I think, the staff had grown to five, and there were five desks.

Huff: Between that period--fall of '47--and the beginning of the negotiations for the Mitsui Library, I don't remember much. I think it was all more or less a clean-up operation, learning to know the other parts of the library, particularly Bindery, Gift and Exchange, Order, Interlibrary Loan, knowing the people there, and so on.

RL: Did the materials circulate freely, or were there any restrictions?

Huff: There were some, and I made them much stricter. I've had the firm belief always, which is not shared by most professors, that a research library should be not only for the acquisition of needed materials, but also for their preservation. A considerable part of the collection did not circulate because Fryer had the stipulation that none of his library ever leave the building. I should say that a small fund called the Fryer Fund also came into the library, and the books bought with that money could not circulate.

Then I'd made Betty McKinnon and perhaps others at that time--maybe Charles [Hamilton] was there by that time--work quite hard one summer, all of them, making a list of provisions of what should be non-circulating--quite long. There were about twenty different conditions: fragility, loose plates, prohibitive cost, out of print, and so on. I don't think that's being followed now, but in my day it was. On the whole, people weren't unpleasant about it, because I would, certainly for professors, always allow an over-the-weekend loan, which was usually enough.

Erotica didn't circulate because the books would have been mutilated. We had almost none in the library. When van Gulik made a gift of that expensive album of his--

RL: Is that Erotic Color Prints of the Ming Period?

Huff: Yes, that's it. I didn't look at it. I thought, "Hm!" Too close to the Puritans, I guess! [Laughter]

He found a Ming edition of a very erotic book, text and pictures--block prints--of which, I think, no other copy has ever been discovered, and his long essay on Chinese sex life is based on that, reproductions and translation of the text. I just took it to Mr. Coney. There was a section in the main library for erotica. Later I asked him if he'd looked at the book, and he said, "I looked at one picture and put it away." [Laughter]

RL: As I understand it, van Gulik had fifty copies printed and never sold them. He gave them to libraries and to his friends. Is that correct?

Huff: That's true, and we were lucky, I guess, to be one of the libraries. There were only four or five. Well, there weren't that many in this country: L.C. [Library of Congress], Harvard, and ourselves, possibly, and places like the British Museum, of course, and various European national libraries.

RL: And the Percival David Collection in London got one.

Huff: Oh.

RL: I see. Now, I ran into a problem in trying to count the collection, because "volume" is a slippery word. For the purposes of this interview, how would you define a volume in a Chinese book, and could you briefly describe it? As I sit in the study, I can see what you're talking about, but our readers can't.

Huff: Yes. Years and years ago the Committee on East Asian Libraries, a national committee, especially the Chinese librarians on that committee, agreed to consider a volume, for purposes of counting, any separate physical piece. I don't have any bound as Mr. Fryer did, I think, but that's a volume [showing book to interviewer]. The same works that are reproduced in here would come out in ten or twenty in this set [indicating different sets of volumes]. A separate physical entity counts as a volume, irrespective of length.

RL: I had heard that you had a considerable detective job to do in finding materials which supposedly belonged to the library, but due to the difficulties of checking out materials in Oriental languages, were all over Berkeley. Is that true?

Huff: Yes. To a certain extent. The only exit, you see, in those days, from the stacks was through the Loan Department where the books could be checked out, and except for some Japanese books that had both English and Japanese title pages, the only records that the Loan Department could keep were call numbers alone. I suppose between Betty McKinnon and me, we were able to reclaim more than half. But, of course, people had left town, and so on, and we never could get them all.

RL: Did this include periodicals that you found with broken runs and so on?

Huff: Oh, yes.

RL: How did you feel about the job when you'd been in it for a few months? Was it stimulating or overwhelming, given all the difficulties that I kept reading about in your memoranda and annual reports?

Huff: I never felt it overwhelming. I sometimes became impatient with the seeming slowness of progress in the processing, but I can't remember ever having thought that it couldn't be done in time. The only lack of enthusiasm I felt from time to time was caused in no way by the library, but by the fact that I wanted to be doing something else, and that feeling, every few months, would well up almost uncontrollably. I wanted to be translating texts, but it was a purely selfish feeling. I knew that I'd never work till I was 67, but I didn't want to leave the library until it was in good condition.

Recollections of the Oriental Languages Faculty; Lessing, Boodberg, Needham, and Others

RL: Would you tell me about the people who were teaching in the Far Eastern field when you came in 1947?

Huff: Yes. The chairman of the Department of Oriental Languages at that time was Ferdinand Dietrich Lessing, who was a scholar primarily in the field of Chinese and Manchu Lamaism, also Tibetan. He taught the Manchu language and was at that time working on his masterpiece, of which only the first volume appeared--he was working on the second at his death--on the famous temple and monastery in Peking, the Yung Ho Kung, in the northwestern part of the city, a Llamaist temple.

RL: Can you tell me a little more about Mr. Lessing, whom I knew only slightly, and who was then, I think, [1951] working on his Manchu dictionary. What was he like as a teacher? He was one of the people whom we had hoped to have a memoir of, and in fact have just a preliminary sketch.

Huff: I was so far outside his field, I can really only say that my opinion of him as a scholar is second-hand.

Huff: I saw him primarily at the regular Monday luncheon meetings of the department at the Faculty Club. Socially, he was very amusing. He had quite a fund of jokes, amusing incidents in Germany when he was growing up. Well, of course, if he sat next to a visiting scholar in his own field, the conversation was quite over my head. [Laughter]

He had the German--I think of it as German--attitude toward university libraries that I've seen in others. He thought that they were built for the faculty, and that there should be no restraints, that a faculty member should not need to sign a charge slip, that he should be free to take the books, as such people always say, "Nobody else is interested in them," to his office and never return them.

RL: How did you deal with this problem?

Huff: Oh, with a customary compromise. I didn't want to offend him mightily, of course, and in certain cases it was perfectly true; nobody else read Manchu, that is, at that time. Later Chaoying Fang, when he was on the staff of the library, studied the language under Mr. Lessing.

We spent some years searching for a certain Mongol-Russian dictionary by Kowalewski which had become rare, of which we finally acquired a copy. I put it in the reading room as a reference book where the cataloguers, among others, occasionally needed to consult it. It was our only copy and the only one we could afford. Mr. Lessing, instead of asking me if he could keep it in his office, was so incensed that he wrote a very long memo to Mr. Coney, saying that I was totally un-understanding of scholarship. Mr. Coney was so overwhelmed he sent it to me [chuckle], and what was that expression that was--maybe it's still common? Oh, yes. Mr. Coney simply wrote across the head of the first page, "What's the pitch?" [Laughter]

RL: And how was that one resolved?

Huff: I wrote an equally long memo to Mr. Coney to accompany the original one when I returned it and explained it, and, as I remember, we won. [Laughter] I'm quite certain that we did, and then, luckily, a pirated edition of the dictionary came out, and so I bought a copy two, and it went back to Mr. Lessing. Yes, I can still see the dictionary.

RL: Did Mr. Lessing develop a school of Manchu studies here?

Huff: Not really. That term would be too grand for it. He had later, after Chaoying Fang studied with him, a very, very promising Korean student who did so well that he was given a fellowship in the East later; it was to Harvard. I don't know what became of him.

Mrs. Lessing was a formidable woman. They gave very nice parties. They built a charming house on Euclid. They also had a house in Carmel, I believe.

RL: She certainly is a formidable woman. I met her at a wedding recently. Unchanged, as far as I could tell. [Laughter]

Huff: Oh! I haven't seen her for many years.

After Professor Lessing's death, she brought in a few Chinese books that he had owned that were in the house, and wanted the library to buy them. I think some of that same old attitude went over into her that the library's for the professor; he's not to do anything but use it. All of the books were duplicates except one, and it was incomplete. She said, "It couldn't be" and, of course, it being in Chinese, it would have been hard for her to tell. That was in a t'ao, in a Chinese case. It was a very attractive edition. I don't remember which work it was, but it wasn't a rare book, really. There would have been no point in the world in buying an incomplete set.

She had an unfortunate accident soon after they came here, and I think that influenced her a bit. She was learning to drive and she crippled a woman on the campus.

RL: Dreadful.

Huff: You know, it would be as hard for Mrs. Lessing as for the victim.

RL: Yes. And in what way were you suggesting that this influenced her?

Huff: I think it may have made her a little doubtful of how she might be received by any person that she didn't know well or was just meeting. When I came, there was still a great deal of talk about it, much too much, and that may have been as much as ten years later.

RL: That's very poignant.

- RL: Then, Mr. [Peter Alexis] Boodberg, who was somebody everybody admired so much, of Russian origin. Wasn't he originally a count?
- Huff: A baron. His father had been a high military officer, I think, in the Czarist regime. Mr. Boodberg was born in 1903 in Vladivostok. Around the time of the Revolution, Mr. Boodberg made his way to Berkeley via Harbin and Japan. I never talked to him about that because in the days that I knew him, he didn't look with great favor upon graduate students or assistant professors spending time to study in the Far East.
- RL: What were his reasons for that?
- Huff: I think he felt that some kind of an exotic Oriental spell exerted itself [laughter] and took the traveler away from the strict classical regime at home. I know he said to me once, speaking of one such person who had gone to Japan and couldn't bear to leave it and so stayed for eight years [chuckle], "It cannot be done. It cannot be done by anyone in any country. You may not, without jeopardizing your whole brain and soul, forsake your own cultural heritage, try to take on another." In that case, I think he was perfectly right. I didn't tell him that all the time I lived in China I wanted more than anything to be Chinese. [Chuckle]
- RL: And yet he himself involuntarily had abandoned his Russian heritage.
- Huff: Yes, but not his classical education and the whole Mediterranean culture, with which I think he associated himself. He probably knew a great deal about family roots, and they may have gone back to Europe, of course. The name almost suggests it.
- RL: I had heard that the family came from the Baltic, and the Hanseatic League. I don't know whether that's true or not. But tell me what he was like as a professor, scholar, teacher.
- Huff: Perfectly delightful lecturer. The course which became the most famous, obviously because it was well attended, was the course which I think he gave every year called "Chinese Literature in Translation." He always had several hundred, and one year I heard there were 500 enrolled.
- RL: Amazing.
- Huff: He was very witty, of course, and a wizard with words, so much so that many people, I think, still consider him precious on the etymological side.

RL: Did he invent many words, use a large number of neologisms?

Huff: They never became neologisms because most people couldn't understand them. His famous series called "Cedules," which he printed himself, had xeroxed--he would type one page--it ran to fifty-some issues spread over a few years. First I should say that when he felt moved to write about a certain word or phrase and analyze it, trace it as he saw it, he'd give up smoking until it was finished, and he always said it was his tobacco money that went into "Cedules," as he called them. The very word "cedules," of course, was too much for most people. [Laughter]

He was a great reader of English poetry. He knew it much better than I did. At least he knew the 20th century, late 19th and 20th century, poets. He was a great admirer of e.e. Cummings and also of a poet whom I've always admired very much, Gerard Manley Hopkins. It has occurred to me more than once in rereading something of Mr. Boodberg's, when he's writing about poetry, that he was influenced by Hopkins, not so much in the famous sprung rhythm as in the use of words, adaptation of words and formation of phrases, unusual phrases.

He was very generous with his time with all the students and with the librarians. Soon after the library was moved into Durant, the interior had been redecorated and repainted, and after the books were shelved, Mr. Boodberg was moved into his new office, which had been--the famous professor of law, Max Radin's office.

Mr. Boodberg strolled into the reading room one morning before many people were studying. I was at the reference desk at the moment, and I walked around it and out toward the main door to greet him, and I said, "How do you like the new quarters?" I was terribly proud of it. Of course, it wasn't crowded in those days; we didn't have too many books to shelve in that building. He leaned back against the island sort of dictionary stand in the middle of the reading room, put both of his elbows on it, looked up at the light blue, newly painted ceiling, shook his head, and said, "It's a puzzle." I said, "A puzzle?" He said, "Yes. How could you do it? How did you get the building? I can't figure it out." [Laughter]

RL: What did he mean?

Huff: He was a very modest person, modest about the department as well as about himself, and Boalt Hall, after all, had been built for

Huff: the lawyers in 1911 or '12. It was a very elegant building, with imported marble and whatnot, and he couldn't imagine that anyone in the Far Eastern field could be given such elegant quarters right in the center of the campus. There was opposition to it, of course. Some members of The Bancroft Library had wanted it, though, heaven knows, they would have outgrown it sooner than we did.

RL: Why do you think that Mr. Boodberg published so little?

Huff: [Pauses to think] Partly, I daresay, because his writing was very difficult, and it might have been difficult to persuade a publisher that enough copies of any given piece would sell to pay for it. I think there's something in that. [Goes to get some of Mr. Boodberg's writings.]

The University of California Press is publishing all of the works of which copies can be found, collected by a former student, Alvin P. Cohen. I'm sure that Mr. Boodberg never wrote hurriedly. He was one of the foremost critics of the way that many--it's coming more and more to the fore in the press now--social scientists, especially, write fuzzy English.

RL: Criticisms from outside the Oriental Languages Department sometimes centered on what was perceived as the way Mr. Boodberg trained his students. Nobody doubted his extraordinary scholarship, but in terms of the sort of perfection that he asked of his students, it was seen as resulting in English translations that were impenetrable.

Huff: Was it?

RL: I don't know how much validity there is in that criticism. But if you have words, as you say, that did not become neologisms because they were not accepted, and therefore they are not words at all in the sense of communicating, you've got a problem.

Huff: For one who reads Greek and Latin easily [chuckle], there is no problem. But I read no Greek.

RL: Another thing that was said, and I don't know again how valid it was, was that the demands of the Oriental Languages department were so overwhelming on graduate students that they either took an excessively long time in getting their Ph.D. or were discouraged.

Huff: Yes. I remember that students, the date for whose preliminary exams for the Ph.D. had been set, couldn't wait to discover the names of the professors on their examining committee, and if Mr. Boodberg's name was among them [laughter], they shuddered with dismay. I heard it said, and it sounds quite plausible to me, that when Mr. Boodberg was on such a committee he always asked the first question, and the first question ran something like this: "You are working to become a Doctor of Philosophy. What does 'philosophy' mean?" [Laughter]

RL: An extraordinary man.

Huff: Yes. Edward Schafer, in his eulogy of Professor Boodberg in the Journal of the American Oriental Society, January, 1974, published some time after Mr. Boodberg's death, said that he, Schafer, had talked with Mr. Boodberg's sister, who, I think, still lives in San Francisco, and that she had said that Peter, as a young child, had been the bane of the family's existence because he never forgot anything and he was fascinated with ships. When he was still quite a young boy, he had memorized all of the measurements, cargo capacities, gun emplacements, of all of the warships in all the countries for which he could find information, and that the family would gather for a comfortable meal and then have to listen to Peter's statistics. [Laughter]

RL: Anything else about the Boodbergs?

Huff: Of course, Mr. Boodberg was blessed with a most charming wife, whom you've met, I'm sure.

RL: Yes.

Huff: Elena. I don't know where they met. Oh, yes, I do. They met here. Mrs. Boodberg was married to a professor and Mr. Boodberg was a student living in Oakland and attending the university here. Mr. Boodberg told me that he lived in a rooming house in a rather disgraceful part of Oakland, the least expensive, and the house where he lived hadn't sufficient heat on very cold and damp nights, and he said with some embarrassment, but some twinkle in his eye, that on such occasions he and his student friends would go out and find one of the board sidewalks then in Oakland and take off a few planks for firewood. [Laughter]

He studied under Mr. Fryer, of course, and probably E.T. Williams. It was always said--I heard it at Harvard--that as

Huff: Mr. Boodberg advanced in his graduate studies here, continuing to be poor, that he was asked to tutor in Chinese, and I gather he did, and that one of the students--I don't know which department; he may have been in Oriental Languages--E.M. Gale and T.C. Lin, who were translating, or trying to translate, the famous "Discourse on Salt and Iron," an early Chinese text, that Mr. Gale engaged Mr. Boodberg to help him. And it was always said then that the work in fact was Mr. Boodberg's. I don't know.

I think Mr. Gale took a position in the Midwest, and, as far as I know, published and wrote no more. That text was published in the Journal of the American Oriental Society monograph series.

The Boodbergs had one child, Xenia, who became a very good pianist and then married. Mr. Boodberg was very proud of his grandchildren, a boy and a younger girl. Mr. Boodberg sometimes I would meet on the stairs of Durant, and he would be chuckling, quite alone and chuckling, and I met him. I was descending and he was ascending one morning. I spoke to him and said, "What are you chuckling about?" He said, "Oh, my grandson." I think Dickie was then about five. He said, "They came to visit last evening. The family came to our house, and when they were ready to leave, Dickie came up to me and said, 'Grandfather, I love you, but your English is queer.'" [Laughter]

RL: It was a very idiosyncratic accent and very enjoyable.

Huff: Yes.

Another time, I met him on the stairs and he looked at me and said, "I'm getting old. I know what Po Chü-i meant when he said he was seeing black butterflies." Po Chü-i was a 9th century poet, and I looked for the poem when I got home. Po was lamenting being sixty and complaining of the little black dots he was seeing that reminded him of butterflies. It was several years before Mr. Boodberg's cataract operation. Now I understand too.

RL: What was Mr. Boodberg's stand on the Loyalty Oath controversy?

Huff: He didn't sign. No, I'm sure he didn't, and that had a rather sad family effect. Professor Boodberg's brother was teaching in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. He and his brother quarrelled over the oath because Peter Boodberg took it very much to heart, and his brother said, "It's superficial. It will pass. Sign it and

Huff: forget it." And that was too bad.

RL: Did it disrupt their relationship?

Huff: I don't know how much, but at his brother's death Mr. Boodberg mentioned it to me, and he said it was one of the regrets of his life. So, it had some effect, I suppose.

RL: I think that must have been a very courageous thing for Mr. Boodberg to do, because it was said--I don't know if it was true--that he had no passport, or rather he only had a Czarist passport.

Huff: I think that's true. He didn't go to Europe until--I think he finally got an American passport, and I don't know how long he tried, perhaps not long at all. He and his wife went to Europe some time in the, perhaps, mid-'60s, and they had a lovely time. He never could get over it. He hadn't realized how much there was, he said.

Hello Chin-po [to dog].

RL: Well, did the oath controversy then damage the Oriental Languages department if Mr. Boodberg and Edward Schafer and [Leonard] Olschki were not teaching?

Huff: Well, I think they were. Of course, I think Mr. Olschki didn't have tenure, and he may have been called simply "lecturer." I'm not certain. I think they went right on teaching. I don't remember how it was resolved even.

Mr. Olschki was a delightful gentleman, most gracious, and I really enjoyed him.

RL: It was declared unconstitutional eventually, but that wasn't till about '52, I believe.

Huff: Yes. Well, I'm sure they were allowed to continue in their classes.

RL: Did it create very bad feeling within the department?

Huff: I think not. My impression of those times and the Monday lunches was that everyone was agreed on the unwisdom of the loyalty oath.

RL: Lessing, Boodberg. Who else was here in 1947?

Huff: Edward Schafer, I think, received his degree in June of '47 and was appointed and began to teach that year. He was one of the students who persevered under Mr. Boodberg and idolized him, of course.

He, Schafer, began to write articles on quite a wide variety of subjects, mostly to do with the T'ang dynasty, in which he continues. He began to write articles quite early, and I remember saying to Mr. Boodberg that he had started one of his articles with what seemed to me a shocking bibliographic mistake. Well, Mr. Boodberg's forte was not bibliography. He really wasn't interested in editions, which is perfectly all right. I was really only because it was drilled into me in Peking. It never had been at Harvard. And Mr. Boodberg, I thought, would say to me, "What's the mistake?" But no. He looked at me, smiled sweetly, and said, "Please tell Mr. Schafer." [Laughter] I never had the courage to tell him.

I also found fault with some of [Schafer's] English constructions. Some years later at one of the Monday lunches--I think it was before his first great book came out, The Golden Peaches of Samarkand--I mentioned the writings of Sacheverell Sitwell, who is one of my favorite prose authors. His poetry, there isn't very much of it. I've never found it notable. But as an English stylist, I think he is at the top of his generation. I mentioned one of his works, which I had recently bought, the one called Arabesque and Honeycomb, a perfectly lovely collection of essays on the Near East. Of course, Mr. Schafer knows Arabic, and he's interested in that part of the world, and said he'd never heard of that author. I said, "I'll lend you my copy." "No," he said, he would take it from the library. He was one of the very conscientious library users; he returned books as soon as he'd read them.

RL: [Laughter] That's quite unusual for the faculty, isn't it?

Huff: Most, most. Almost unheard of. Frederic Wakeman and John Jamieson are other examples of honest borrowers, and I'm sure that Joe was one. So, the next week Ed Schafer told me he'd read that book and he was going to read everything of Sacheverell Sitwell's.

Some years later, at a dinner at the Faculty Club given when Denzel Carr and I were both retiring, I was talking to Mr. Schafer and his wife after the dinner, and I complimented him on his style. I said, "You've developed a very pleasing style." And his wife said, "Well, you've got the credit for that," and I said, "I?" [Laughter] I'd never corrected a paper of his in my life! And she

Huff: said, "No, it was recommending Sacheverell Sitwell. He read everything and saw that it was a lovely style and tried to write as well." Well, he doesn't write quite the same, of course; no two people do. But I was quite pleased.

RL: That's very interesting. Well, then, we have Mr. Boodberg and Schafer in Chinese, Lessing in Manchu and Tibetan.

Huff: And Chen Shih-hsiang in Chinese. He came to Berkeley in 1945. He was maybe in an unhappy state of mind because his first wife had gone back to China. It was not until later that he married Grace. He was already becoming interested in teaching earlier periods--that is T'ang--and I remember when I was talking to Mr. Boodberg one day, he laughed about Professor Chen and said, "You know, all Chinese scholars have one thing in common, or most of them have one thing in common. They start out in the modern period. We brought Professor Chen here to teach modern Chinese, because I can't. And what's he doing? Walking backwards into the T'ang!" [Laughter] Well, of course, before his death, Chen Shih-hsiang had got into the Shih Ching, beyond which you can hardly go, except the oracle bones. [Laughter] His last long, long, long paper was on the Shih Ching.

RL: He was himself a poet of some note, wasn't he?

Huff: Yes. His translation of the Wen Fu, the "Fu on Literature," written in the 3rd century, is quite beautifully done in regard both to accuracy, I think, and English.

He said of Mr. Boodberg once--of course, everyone analyzed everybody else [chuckle]--that the reason why Mr. Boodberg was found unreadable by many people was because he was translating from one foreign language into another. I said, "I bet anything he would have written would have been unreadable in Russian too." [Laughter] Unreadable to the average reader, but I can read some of his writings over and over with great pleasure.

His feud with Mr. Creel in the pages of T'oung Pao I've never reread. I found it--well, Mr. Boodberg, as I remember it, remained the gentleman. Mr. Creel let his irritation show a bit. I think Mr. Boodberg was right.

RL: Was he criticizing Creel?

Huff: Creel had written somewhere, perhaps even in T'oung Pao, that the

Huff: nature of the Chinese language was such that a Chinese in speaking--Creel probably modified this--an educated Chinese in speaking visualized the characters, and Mr. Boodberg thought that was nonsensical. I agree with Mr. Boodberg. Mr. Creel speaks beautiful Chinese, or used to; he probably still does. And it may have been true for him.

RL: Yes. Did Mr. Boodberg speak Chinese?

Huff: I remember his addressing a meeting of the Colloquium Orientologicum one evening, and his subject was, I think, a few select Chinese poems; I remember he started with one by Wang Wei. 'Percy, don't be tiresome.' [Speaking to cat] In his first sentences, he asked the audience to forgive his pronunciation. He said, "I have never studied spoken Chinese, and my tones will not be correct," and I think that is true. I think his pronunciation except for tones was perfectly all right, and he had a tremendous vocabulary. He used the catalogue with the greatest rapidity. In my day, it was filed by character, not by romanization.

RL: When I asked about Shih-hsiang as a poet, I meant as a modern poet speaking in his own voice, in Chinese.

Huff: In Chinese. [Pauses to think] I'm really not sure. He gave me copies of things that he wrote off-hand. I don't remember the poetry, but perhaps. You know, he was a great friend of the American poet, John Hall Wheelock. [Looking through book] ...not one of the better known poets. [Tape off briefly]

Shih-hsiang had beautiful handwriting. [Looking at Essay on Literature Written by the Third-Century Chinese Poet Lu Chi, translated by Shih-hsiang Chen in the Year MCMXLVIII, revised 1952. Published, semicentennial anniversary of Peking University in 1948. Printed in 1953 at the Anthoensen Press, Portland, Maine.] This is the second edition of that.

RL: Oh, yes. It's beautiful.

Huff: It's a beautifully made book.

RL: I remember I asked Shih-hsiang once about his own poetry, and he said to me, "I don't write any more. There is nobody to write for," and I think that was an expression of a sort of existentialist uprooting; he felt déraciné from his Chinese past. I don't know whether that was a mood of that day or that year, or whether that

RL: was a permanent condition with him, but he said it with great sadness. I never asked him again.

Huff: Yes. Have you read Harold Acton's memoirs, two volumes?

RL: No.

Huff: I have only the second, and I haven't read the first. I'd like to. He and Chen Shih-hsiang were close friends and collaborated on at least one book of translation.

RL: So, now we have four people in Chinese. Was there anybody in Japanese?

Huff: When I came in '47, I think there was one professor, a Japanese himself, who later went to U.C.L.A. [University of California at Los Angeles]. U.C.L.A. opened a Department of Oriental Languages in '48. I'm sorry to say I don't remember his name. It was a long Japanese name. [He was] a rather shy person whom I really didn't get to know.

Mr. [Susumu W.] Nakamura was one of Mr. Lessing's students. He had studied Tibetan with him and, I think, had become quite advanced in it, but for some reason never did go on to complete his Ph.D.

RL: But at least there was a substructure of Japanese instruction.

Huff: Yes.

RL: I don't know if that's the right word to use. I'd like to be careful about that.

Huff: Yes, I think it is. Mr. Nakamura had been a teacher, hadn't he, at Boulder?

RL: That's right, yes. Well, of course, before that, at Berkeley, the Navy Japanese Language School, which was first in Berkeley in 1942, and then after the relocation order removing Japanese from the three western states, the school had to move and it went to Boulder.

Huff: Oh.

RL: Yes, indeed. Nakamura-sensei. [Laughter] He taught my husband at Berkeley and Boulder. Much loved.

Huff: Was he?

RL: Oh, yes.

Huff: The person to come, in a sense, to start the [Japanese] department-- perhaps I should leave this till later. It wasn't until '50 that he was brought in, and thereby hangs an extremely funny tale.
[Laughter]

RL: Well, since we're talking about it, why don't you tell me now?

Huff: Oh. Well, after elaborate and, in some ways, harrowing negotiation of a year or more than a year, E.A.L. acquired the Mitsui family library. I spoke to Mr. Boodberg and said, "This is still a secret," but told him what we had, and I said, "You have no tenured person to teach Japanese. I absolutely cannot bring that collection in-- it isn't all Japanese books, but still--if there is no professor of Japanese, no promise of students--who will use the collection?"

I heard nothing, and some days later, Mr. Boodberg came into the office, still the old 413 in the Doe building, and Betty McKinnon, who later married Denzel Carr, says, with the greatest assurance--I can't credit it really--she says that I asked Mr. Boodberg if he had found anyone, that he said it was very difficult, and that I, at that point, pushed him into the northwest corner of the room under the window, and said, "You have to find somebody!" Betty was sitting in the southeast corner at her desk. I don't know.

In any case, Denzel Carr was brought. He was then in Tokyo. He had been a member of the War Crimes Trial Commission. He knows many, many languages. He, as quite a young man, had taught Japanese in Cracow in Polish to Polish students.

RL: Extraordinary!

Huff: Yes. Then he'd gone on to Japan. I think he took his doctor's degree at Yale, and then I don't know. He was in the navy in the Second [World] War. So, he came to Berkeley in 1950 to teach Japanese, which he did, though more and more he was drawn to Indonesian, which he was teaching in his last years on the faculty.

In History at that time I can remember only Woodbridge Bingham. There was a professor of--for some years, and I can't say he was here in '47--plant pathology, who was very interested

Huff: in Japanese publications, and we bought a considerable number for him. Also possibly a little later, a professor in the Biology Department, who was interested in Chinese scientific publications. His name was [Johannes M.] Proskauer.

RL: Then there was Professor [N. Wing] Mah, wasn't there?

Huff: And Professor Mah in political science. He used the library. Robert Scalapino came quite soon--'49. His students formed a considerable segment of the users of the library because many of the Oriental students, Korean and Japanese particularly, chose to take their degrees in political science, and Mr. Scalapino always had research assistants and teaching assistants, usually from one of those countries.

His brilliant student Chalmers Johnson, of course, became a constant patron, and a most helpful person to the library.

RL: And, of course, Mr. Maenchen.

Huff: Oh, Otto J. Maenchen had come from Mills. He had been teaching at Mills College and had come to Berkeley.

RL: In art history?

Huff: Yes. He was one whom I had to lead in the way he should go. I always enjoyed him and admired him, but, again, the German professors' attitude toward libraries--[Laughter]. He thought it was quite all right to keep a book in the desk drawer and forget it, but worse than that--I did rap him over the knuckles when I discovered this--he returned a portfolio of loose plates, and that's one of the categories of books which we never circulated, but he had begged--he wanted to have slides made. So, I had given it to him on a limited loan of a week or two. He brought it back and I collated it, and one plate was missing. I had checked it before it was given him, so that I knew, undoubtedly inadvertently, he'd kept that plate. I said, "When you have a few free moments, would you look in every one of your desk drawers in the art seminar room?" I had a strong feeling he put it there, and he probably put other things over it. And sure enough!

His work on the Huns came out posthumously and it's wonderful, a beautiful book.

RL: I'd love to see that. I must.

Huff: I have a copy here. Have you cleaned up the stacks of books that--

RL: [Laughter] No, I still have books on my study floor, and I'm trying to be very self-controlled about not bringing any more into the house until those are shelved.

Huff: Joseph Needham was finishing some months of residence here when I came.

RL: Really?

Huff: Yes.

RL: Joseph Needham, the man from Cambridge, history of science.

Huff: Yes. Science and Civilisation in China, spelled with an "s."

RL: Was he then considered to be a communist?

Huff: Not so much now as he was at one time. In one of his recent bits of writing, I read a statement of his that indicated that he was now only partially sympathetic with the way the [Chinese] government is going. I think at that time when I met him he was a communist. He had come from China, I think, to Berkeley, and I remember him as rather a fearsome, intent person. He must be a very intense person, though, to have produced as much as he has for one thing. And, as I say, he was finishing his visit. He probably left in June. I didn't see him frequently, but he was here.

RL: Excuse me, I don't think you quite answered. Was he to your knowledge at that time a communist? I'm not sure that he ever was. He made a number of noises about it in different directions.

Huff: [Pauses to think] It's awfully puzzling. I was reading an article the other day about [André] Malraux: Was he or wasn't he? Is he or isn't he? [Laughter] I can't say. I would never have asked anyone who might have known.

RL: I wasn't perhaps asking a question on the factual level, but on the subjective level. What sorts of attitudes was he projecting in terms of his political orientation?

- Huff: He didn't talk with me about anything but books. I can't answer that. Ed Schafer could. More than once Mr. Schafer has used his sabbatical year or half-year to spend it in Cambridge University working with Needham. You can see why they'd be sympathetic intellectually.
- RL: Yes. Would you say why they would be?
- Huff: Well, they are both interested in historical Chinese science, on Ed Schafer's side perhaps more of the natural sciences, and on Mr. Needham's probably more of the applied, but there's an overlap.
- RL: Was George M. McCune teaching in the History Department?
- Huff: Yes, but I think that when I came to Berkeley he was already too ill to come to the campus, for the only time I met him was in his home, a lovely place near Martinez, and he by then was bedridden. A very pleasant person. We talked all afternoon out there. Yes, I think I went out with Katherine and James Caldwell. They were friends of the McCunes. We had a very pleasant time and saw what must have been, and I hope it still exists, one of the choicest collections of Korean ceramics. They had acquired lovely things in Korea.
- RL: He was teaching Korean history then?
- Huff: History, and--his book, I think, was completed after his death, and I think it came out with a co-author, if I'm not mistaken, probably one of his graduate students. I don't know whether or not he was the son of missionaries. Evelyn was the daughter of missionaries in Korea. His brother, Shannon McCune, had a career in Far Eastern geography. Of course, there's a Far Eastern geographer on the campus who's been here for many years too, Clarence Glacken.
- RL: So, then, to sum it up, there was a scattering of people teaching Far Eastern subjects in other departments, but, would it be correct to say, no large group, or even significant group, of graduate students using materials in East Asiatic languages when you came in 1947?
- Huff: Oh, it would have been very few.

Huff: In those days, there were two--there was the Art Department, which was really History of Art, and there was also Decorative Art. I'm not certain whether or not there were courses given in that that used Far Eastern materials, but I know that Winfield Scott Wellington, now retired, was a great admirer of Chinese objects and art and had many pieces. Some of them he showed me in his office--furniture. There's a chair that's up near the front door that was his. He sold it to an antique dealer when he sold many things because he had to move out to Rossmoor or wherever he's living.

And also, in the same department, Lucretia Nelson, now retired, primarily interested in design in several media, must have introduced her students to things from the Far East, types of painting and printing and sculpture. Lucretia is a witty and amusing person. Once she told a story of an automobile trip from the East or Midwest to California, when she was young. In Los Angeles the car was breathing its last, and before the group left it to its fate, one of them painted on the body "Leave her lay where Jesus slang her."

RL: Was there anyone else that you recall?

Huff: In the same department, Lea Miller and Anna Gayton. In the fall, there came to stay, I believe, for one year, E.R. Hughes. Where was he? [Pauses to think] London, or Leeds. Maybe it says in this book. [Looks through book] It's hard for me to read because it [the bandage] keeps my glasses askew.

RL: Why don't I read it then? [Reading from book] He was a reader in Chinese philosophy and religion at Oxford.

Huff: I think that's where he was attached in '47.

He and his wife came to my apartment for tea one afternoon and pleased me right down to what Gertrude Stein would call my "bottom nature" when they complimented me on the apartment, which was not grand in any way. I said, "Well, it's frightfully simple and rather sparsely furnished," and they both smiled and said, "That's why it's nice." [Laughter]

RL: Lovely!

Huff: I didn't hear his lectures.

Huff: I should say that in all these years, all of those years in the library, beginning from about the first day, I attracted a good deal of unfavorable attention because I was thought to work insanely, and I was more often than not too tired in the evening to attend lectures and such things. I could observe the way that other people lived, both in the library and among the faculty, in such a way that they would still feel quite refreshed at five, but I didn't [chuckle], and I often worked much later.

Did I tell you the four lines I typed on a slip of paper and had always in the middle drawer of my desk so that every time I opened it I saw it?

RL: What were they?

Huff: Be you not troubled with the time, which drives
O'er your content these strong necessities;
But let determin'd things to destiny
Hold unbewail'd their way.

That used to encourage me greatly!

RL: Whose is that?

Huff: Shakespeare, Antony and Cleopatra.

RL: Do you now regret at all that you worked at such a pitch and, in a way, kept yourself out of many things you would have enjoyed?

Huff: No, I don't regret it for a moment, because certain things in the library I could do, or thought I could do, either more thoroughly or faster than another person, and while I tried to delegate--as the staff grew larger, I tried to delegate as much authority as I could. I didn't do it blindly as it's sometimes done: "This is your job. I will no longer ask about it. I'll no longer look into that department," sort of thing. And if I had, I think, adopted a slower pace, I shouldn't be yet retired. [Chuckle] Things were undone at the end, but that's inevitable. Cataloguing takes a long time.

Student Interest

RL: Well, does that wrap up the faculty as it was then?

Huff: Then, yes.

RL: And how much student interest was there?

Huff: [Pauses to think] Of course, I never at any time knew many of the undergraduates. They weren't advanced, and there weren't so many of them, of course, and they weren't so advanced in the languages that they would come to the library.

The early graduate students--by "early," I mean in 1947--Edward Schafer, who was getting his degree that year and became a professor here. Richard Mather, I think, finished his degree the following year, and he ever since has been a professor of Chinese at the University of Minnesota. He's a very good scholar. Albert Dien came out, I believe, in the fall, from the University of Chicago, and he is now a professor of Chinese and probably chairman of the department at Stanford. Those three are the ones that I remember most clearly, that I talked most with, and that did begin to take an interest in bibliography. Albert Dien worked on the library staff for two or three years.

Oh, there was a fourth. Michael Rogers must have been a graduate student then. He became a professor of Chinese and Korean here. I have always liked him, although one day early on I caught him out in an act of skullduggery, hiding a reading room book behind others so that he might have it at hand next time!

President Sproul's Support

RL: What about student users of Far Eastern materials in departments other than Oriental Languages? One of the things I'm interested in and trying to get at is how big a clientele for the library was foreseen by President Sproul and Mr. Coney, how the development of a very extensive facility in a beautiful building with imported marble could have been justified at that time to people outside the Far Eastern field. And I think we get a perspective of how little interest in the Far East there was in this university by this sort of discussion.

Huff: Yes.

I think that on the part of President [Robert Gordon] Sproul it was probably a very sensitive awareness of the fact that the war had changed everything so much that the Far Eastern studies had small but strong footholds in the East, that there should be one in the West, and that it would be supported generally. Of course, he couldn't be certain. I think he was quite right in that.

RL: Now library policy: When Mr. Coney appointed you, what were his expectations for the East Asiatic Library, and how much university support did it have? To what extent was President Sproul interested in this and behind it?

Huff: Intimately. Just before I retired, I wrote President Sproul a rather long letter, which I felt was the least I could do to express how I, as the librarian of the collection, felt about its growth, which I knew from Mr. Coney was very close to Mr. Sproul's interests.

Mr. Coney, in the Christmas holidays before he engaged me, asked A.K. Chiu, the librarian of the Harvard-Yenching Library, to spend two weeks in Berkeley surveying what there was and to advise him about whether or not there was a good enough nucleus to justify its being built upon. Mr. Chiu concluded--I read his report when I came--that it was very much worth it, and that's why Mr. Coney went ahead, and President Sproul supported him, and continued to do so when it came to the Mitsui library, and right down the line.

West Coast Policy on Development of Oriental Libraries
(or lack of it)

RL: I'd like to ask you about a policy statement on library specialization made by Mr. Coney in 1947. He suggested setting limits for Japanese and Chinese collections on the West Coast. Was this ever implemented and if so, to which libraries did it apply?

Huff: I think it excluded Hoover, which has special subject limitations and no limitation on types of material like ephemera.

Huff: The suggestion had been Mr. Coney's. I recall his talking with me about it and asking what I thought of the numbers of large and general Far Eastern collections, at least in California. I don't remember his including Oregon and Washington, but I may be wrong. He asked if I thought that several of them in the state were really called for. I said I didn't, that perhaps I was slow in giving up the old-fashioned idea that when a special collection or a rarity is needed by a scholar, he might be expected to go to the place where it was, for example the gazetteer collection in L.C. [Library of Congress].

I don't know what meetings with other university librarians Mr. Coney had. What happened in the end was nothing. [Chuckle] Mary Wright [at Hoover] and I agreed very early to divide China, to divide parts of it geographically, and in the acquisition of gazetteers because they were costly and they were hard to find. I then took up Mr. Boodberg's suggestion that due to the fact that there was a large Chinese colony here in San Francisco that we should specialize in the southeast provinces, and we always did that--Fukien, Kwangtung, and Kwangsi. Those were gazetteers even down to the smallest geographical unit. Then we also acquired for general reference the provincial gazetteers of the provinces. Mary Wright, as I remember, took the central eastern, eastern central provinces, very important in the early stage of the development of communism.

But in 1948, Mr. [Richard] Rudolph was engaged to become the first professor of Chinese at U.C.L.A., and soon after that I became aware of the fact that the library there was acquiring Chinese materials. A year or so later a professor of Japanese was engaged, and so I assume that Japanese books began to be bought. I've never seen that collection. I've had many reports of it from people who used to come up here to use the East Asiatic Library in the summers. U.C.L.A. never developed one of the major collections, nor did [U.C.] Davis, so far as I know, which began collecting, to my horror; Davis, with its daily bus to Berkeley! I have no idea how the libraries are developing.

Then I learned that, I think, a returned missionary had bequeathed a small but quite good collection to Claremont College, and for some years the library continued to add a little, but used the services only of Chinese student assistants. Then when John Haeger became professor of Chinese history there in 1968, he was the first member of the faculty, probably, to become exceedingly interested. Of course, he'd had this library and before that Princeton. And I suppose it was he who persuaded the librarian to

Huff: look for a proper specialist. The librarian of the oriental collection at Seattle since 1948 had been unaccountably transferred to the philosophy library, to her great distress, and her faithful assistant over the years, whom I knew slightly, Frances Wong, I suppose in loyalty, left. I think John asked me if I knew of anyone, and I recommended her, and she's very good, and she is the librarian there now, so far as I know.

After Dick Irwin's death, his wife asked me how she might sell most of his Chinese books. I knew that many of them were basic books that would be in most libraries, but probably not at Claremont, and so I recommended Claremont. John Haeger came up to look at the collection, and he and I spent an afternoon there in the house counting the volumes, every kind of volume. I had had a preliminary conversation with him on the subject of average per volume cost at that time for such books. Dick's books were largely in very good editions, much as many of these [gestures to indicate surrounding bookshelves]. We had bought them at the same time. It was by no means as large a collection as this.

John started counting the books in the living room, and I started counting those in the study. When we came together in the middle, John said, "Oh, I suppose it will come to 2,000 or 2,500." I said, "It will be over 3,500," and John said, "Oh, why does any teacher ever dispute a librarian on the subject of books?" [Laughter] It came out 3,600 and some. So that went to the Claremont colleges.

I don't know of any other collections in the state.

RL: So, to summarize, really, except in regard to gazetteers with Hoover, there were no restrictions on library building on the west coast.

Huff: I think probably that no one in his library would accept [laughter] restrictions.

VI BUILDING THE EAST ASIATIC LIBRARY

Acquisition Policy

- RL: I read in your initial memorandum to Mr. Coney that your recommendation was that the library should try to triple its Chinese collection and double the Japanese. Would you like to comment on that?
- Huff: I think that's what I reckoned to do in order to establish not the ultimate Far Eastern library, but to establish a good, standard, broad basis upon which then to build, from which one could get into the finer categories and away from the more general works, the standard ones. And I imagine that was, at least in 1947, perhaps even now, a sound calculation, and that's what we set out to do, drawing up a desiderata list that might be used not only for our orders sent out from Berkeley, but also might be used in the event of a willing professor or a library staff member with a special grant going to the Far East. And in the end, of course, that's how our largest acquisitions were made. Professor [Woodbridge] Bingham was willing to use a Chinese desiderata list in China. That was in the summer of '47, I believe. We sent it to him in Shanghai--over fourteen hundred titles and nine thousand dollars. He managed to get nine thousand volumes for us. Mr. Lessing also made a trip to China about that time. All the money was not used. We couldn't have provided [him] with a desiderata list that included Tibetan and Mongol because no one on the staff knew those languages. He knew the collection in Berkeley was small. It's now much larger because of his efforts.
- RL: And were those two professors successful in meeting and filling your orders?

Huff: Yes, so far as I know, and from the comments of visitors to the library, Mr. Lessing was successful. Mr. Bingham, of course, couldn't have managed to buy everything on the list because we had compiled quite a thick one, over a thousand titles, but he bought some of the more notable sets--Ming shih lu, and such things.

RL: Then, as I understand it, the two most notable acquisitions that were made were the Murakami and the Mitsui Libraries. Shall we discuss them chronologically?

The Murakami Library

Huff: I think the Murakami Library was learned of first, and I think it arrived in Berkeley first. Elizabeth McKinnon had been sent to Japan on a special Regents' Grant in 1948. I call it that; it came through the good offices of President Sproul. She also had a \$7,500 grant-in-aid from the Rockefeller Fund. She had been sent to Japan in the fall of '48, and she was buying books, of course. While she was there, she was told of the existence of this library of first editions of the writings of Meiji men of letters. It was then something like--and we were never able to add very much to it--eleven thousand volumes, paperback and some hardcovers, because in the Meiji reign, of course, the Japanese began to do some things in the Western way, and that affected the publishing industry in certain respects.

So far as I know, there is no secret about the price that we paid for that. It seemed in those days quite a lot [\$2,500]. Edwin Reischauer happened to be in Tokyo, so Miss McKinnon asked him if that was the sort of thing he would like for Harvard, the Harvard-Yenching Library. And she wrote in a letter to me that he said, "Certainly, if I had \$2,500 to spend for that." So, she wrote a description of it, and I spoke to Mr. Coney, and he found the money. I can't remember whether that was from the President's Office too, or Mr. Coney's own funds.

It's a perfectly marvelous collection, and years and years later, I heard that among many circles in Japan, literary circles, the loss of the Murakami Collection was considered greater than the loss of the Mitsui Library, which was ten times as large.

RL: Really?

Huff: Yes.

RL: What was the provenance of it? Who had made the collection?

Huff: Well, it's named for the collector, Murakami, of whom I know nothing. As in most cases, at least up to that time, serious Japanese private collectors of both art and books, which are also art, were quite secretive about them. They were never publicized at all, and in general, I think, only a few very close friends might have access to the collection. In the case of wealthy families, the Mitsui family and the Maeda family, a private librarian was employed, a full-time librarian, and sometimes facsimiles were published.

The famous Sonkeikaku [Bunko] series is facsimiles of some of the finest scrolls, many of them ancient, in the Maeda Library. Through the good offices of Mr. Imai Kichinosuke, who was the librarian there, and whom Miss McKinnon met, we were able to acquire in the following years a complete set of the Sonkeikaku series. At one time, it was the only one in the country. I don't know whether it still is or not.

RL: What was the role of Charles Tuttle, a name I know well as a publisher, in the acquisition of the Murakami Library? I believe that you had relations with him in building the library through the years.

Huff: Oh, yes. In the beginning, he was one of the most active book-sellers in Tokyo. He had been in Japan, I suppose, soon after the war, perhaps with the army, as an officer, I think, and had conceived the idea of opening a bookshop there with the help of Japanese, or perhaps at that time an American who knew Japanese. He was a great boon to libraries in the States because his advertisements carried some English, payment could be made to Rutland, Vermont, and it simplified everything.

Frankly, I do not remember his role in the Murakami Library. Perhaps he had it shipped for us. It would have been possible.

He was a very genial person who visited the library several times in those years.

Huff: In later years, when he began to publish, he published books in English and many illustrated books, very nice children's books and others, and so I think most of the orders that went out to him at the end of the time I was there were sent out from the main library for the general library, for the public.

The Mitsui Romance: "A Sheaf of Delicate, Cloudy Documents"

Huff: Well, before Miss McKinnon left Japan, she was told--and I think it was at a cocktail party, and by someone, if I'm not mistaken, whose name she never knew, but he was a go-between--she was told that the Mitsui Library could be had, the main family library; that's to be distinguished from the various branches, each of which had its own library, I suppose.

The family library was comprised of several parts, which had been formed by different collectors, not all of them of the Mitsui family, and was brought together in a huge cement building especially built for the collection in Tokyo. I think Miss McKinnon told me that it was one of the few buildings in that district that was not destroyed in the bombings at the end of the war.

RL: What a miracle.

Huff: Yes. So, from the beginning, we knew that no word of this must be mentioned, and I think Miss McKinnon certainly didn't write it; she waited until she returned from her first trip to Japan. I don't know now how we did it, because in the next year or year and a half, the staff grew to at least, I think, ten or twelve people, in very cramped quarters. But until we were given permission to announce it, which obviously the family knew we had to be given when 460 huge crates arrived, no one but President Sproul and Mr. Coney and Miss McKinnon and I knew of it.

RL: That's a remarkable security effort.

Huff: Well, of course, President Sproul knew because he raised the money for it.

RL: May I ask at this point why the secrecy was so important?

Huff: To the Japanese. The Mitsui family came to receive, and I'm sure they knew they would, tremendous criticism at home for selling it, and I think that's why. I think steps would have been taken to prevent it, had it been known. I don't know how it was got out of Japan. It was got out, of course, through American occupation authorities. Certainly some things were removed that had been listed, but remarkable things came through that would be considered, I suppose, national treasures--three screen maps, one of which had been published years before as one of the oldest Japanese maps of the world and it was dated in the third decade of the 17th century.

RL: So, it was not that other libraries in the Western world might have scooped you?

Huff: One might.

RL: Harvard?

Huff: That's another part of the story that is extremely unclear. When Miss McKinnon came back from Japan, she said, "A list has been sent to Yale, and we can only hope that Yale won't be interested, but we're not to write to Yale." We used to refer to this whole period as the period of the Mitsui romance!

Well, one day, late in the summer, a librarian who worked in the Serials Department, I think it was then called, on the second floor of the library, called me after the morning mail had been delivered and said--she was a very good librarian but very forthright--"I just opened a package from Yale that has some Chinese junk in it. Shall I throw it out?"

RL: Good gracious!

Huff: [Laughter] I am not exaggerating.

I said, "Oh, I'll come down and have a look at it," trying to sound as distant as possible [chuckle], and, of course, it was the manuscript list of titles in the Mitsui collection, incomplete, but enough there in manuscript to give anyone who knew an idea of what it was. We never had a letter from Yale.

RL: Why did Yale send it to Berkeley?

Huff: They had to have been instructed by someone in Japan to forward it. Yale may have written, "We're not interested," and then somebody over there, one of the go-betweens maybe, or maybe Mr. Imai himself, asked Yale to send it to us. That's the only possibility that I can see.

We never had a letter from Yale, and I have never mentioned it to anyone at Yale. I think that it may have been received at Yale as it was received here, in one of the general departments of the library, and by someone who wasn't far-sighted enough to see that it got into the hands of an Orientalist. That's about the only way I can account for it.

Well, we went through it carefully, checked the volume count, and so on. I went down to Mr. Coney one day with the list, and feeling that the cost of the--well, at that time, the family said they would sell any of the seven parts separately, and I said that I had selected what I thought was perhaps the choicest part, and certainly the one which had not been and probably could not be duplicated in America, in the United States, the Asami collection of Korean literature, Korean imprints.

Mr. Coney was in the outer office. We didn't use the word "Mitsui," of course. He drew me in his inner office and said, "Why not the whole thing?" I said, "Why, it's tremendous, and we don't know what it's going to cost." I think the family had set tentative asking prices on the parts.

Mr. Coney said, "Well, have Miss McKinnon write and ask Mr. Imai, perhaps, to begin to feel out the possibility of buying the whole and the approximate cost."

Elizabeth McKinnon was sent to Japan the second time in August, 1949, to try to hasten the negotiations. It was a long, elaborate, and difficult correspondence back and forth. It was decided because of women's being generally not regarded as important as men that she should be accompanied by somebody from the university, and Denzel Carr went. She stayed in the Yashima hotel, now demolished.

Denzel Carr came back early in September because he had to meet his classes and left her alone. I came back from being out of town one Sunday night about eleven o'clock and found that I had received a letter from her in which she said that she was coming home without having been successful, but she could no longer bear the strain, and I can imagine that it was tremendous.

Huff: I went down to Maryon Monahan's apartment, which was in the same compound, and said, "What will we do?" She said, "Go to your office and put in a call to the hotel." It would then be late afternoon in Tokyo. So, we went to my office, called the operator, who I think was a sleepy student, and I said that I wished to put in a person-to-person call to the Yashima hotel in Tokyo. He said, "Tokyo, Japan?" I said, "Yes." So, he put it through without question, and then I called Denzel Carr, who came to the office, so that he too could talk with Betty when the call was completed.

She was just about to leave for a cocktail party, but I persuaded her to give it one more chance--I think I asked her to stay until Friday. Meanwhile, I could talk with Mr. Coney, who could talk with President Sproul. She was in a tremendous state of nervousness and distress, but she stayed until Friday, and it was successful.

We went through close to a year of the most elaborately difficult--because of the ambiguous language which was used in the Japanese correspondence that came to us--the most difficult negotiations that I can imagine. Of course, I'd never been involved in clandestine dealings before. [Chuckle]

RL: What were the causes of the ambiguities? Were they difficulties with English, or were they due to hesitations, or were they due to fears of possible interference?

Huff: I think it was simply the fact that the family, quite understandably needing money at that time to reconstitute its fortune in part, wanted the collection to fetch as high a price as possible, and, secondly, the nature of the Japanese language.

RL: Was the correspondence in Japanese, then?

Huff: From that side, yes.

RL: And you responded in English, did you?

Huff: Yes. I suppose the whole correspondence is still there. It was tremendous [gesturing to indicate a stack of about six inches]. Tremendous! And the Japanese letters came on very thin Japanese paper. They were written not with a brush, but with a pen, and we always received a carbon copy. [Laughter] I said to Mr. Coney, "That makes me feel uneasy." He said, "Don't let it. It's much harder to erase a carbon copy than an original."

Huff: Well, what it ground down to, of course, in the last months, was simply haggling--I shouldn't use that word--our making offers, our going up a little and the family coming down a little, age-old bargaining. And we finally came out, I think, very well on it. Of course, the cost of packing and shipping was tremendous, but not in consideration of the value of the collection and the cost of it.

RL: What was the total cost, approximately?

Huff: We swore never to tell. [Laughter] It isn't even in the correspondence, I think.

It was a mere pittance compared to what it would be now or to what any part of it would fetch now, just as nobody can believe that we paid only \$2,500 for the Murakami Library, about twenty cents a book!

RL: I'm interested that you can reveal the Murakami, but not the Mitsui.

Huff: The Murakami Library had passed into the hands of another, not the original, collector, and it was something of a business.

RL: Were the Mitsuis afraid of invasion of their privacy if the price was revealed?

Huff: Yes, and not to precipitate criticism that I feel sure they knew might come, and did come.

RL: From whom?

Huff: Criticism was all over the front pages of the papers in Japan. I have lots of clippings in the file.

RL: What was the nature of the criticism?

Huff: The biggest and the most shocking headline I remember was: "Great Mitsui Library Washed Away to the United States." [Laughter] And, of course, the reporters could find, could seek out, learned people who'd comment upon the loss to scholarship in Japan.

RL: Where did the Mitsui family's renown lie? Was it in business--are they one of the five big family combines?

Huff: The so-called zaibatsu. Yes. An enormous family corporation, of course, with many industries.

RL: And when had the collection been started? Do you know?

Huff: Parts of it, at least--the eccentric one of the collectors was a Mitsui himself who lived in Kyoto--in the 19th century. He had made the map collection, for one thing, and I'm sure that that was started in the 19th century, and I don't know at what time, probably at his death, it was incorporated into the Tokyo collection.

The two great families that were always spoken of among the zaibatsu, or best known, were Mitsui and Mitsubishi. If the Mitsubishi family has a library, or had, I don't know. [Chuckle] They kept it in the traditional way, if they did.

RL: And how do you account for Elizabeth McKinnon being the one to get the first news of the availability of this collection?

Huff: To the Japanese at that time, not only was the United States a great, victorious giant, but a very wealthy one, and, I think, as the various businesses, small and large, tried to reconstitute themselves in Japan, the bookdealers were among them, of course, and I'm certain that it took a very few hours for word to get around that books were being bought for Berkeley.

Miss McKinnon met many bookdealers and also scholars and librarians, and she spoke, and still speaks, what I have been told by many people is the most admirably or perhaps totally perfect feminine Japanese, which gave her a great head start.

RL: She is half Japanese, isn't she?

Huff: Her mother was Japanese, yes. She was born in Japan and educated there.

So that I'm sure she became very quickly known to all the bookish community. And it was just the misfortune of the Mitsui family that they were, or felt they were, in such dire straits that they must part with this.

Well, I omitted one thing. When the price was suddenly--was suddenly!--was eventually fixed upon, agreed upon, between the two parties, Mr. Coney was on vacation out of town. He used to go up to the mountains for the summer. And Douglas Bryant, now for many years librarian of Harvard, was then an associate librarian acting in Mr. Coney's stead. I think Mr. Coney had

Huff: briefed him a bit on this. So, I went to him. He called President Sproul, and then he (Mr. Bryant) dictated a letter, a file memo, explaining all that had been done and quoting President Sproul as saying, "Oh, I can mark that much money without asking the regents. They're all over the country on their vacations."

When I pointed that out to Mr. Bryant, he all but fainted. The secretary had omitted the negative, and President Sproul had said, "I could not commit that much money without calling the regents, but I'll call every one of them," and he did within, oh, a very short time. It seems to me it was two or three days; he had reached all of them, described the thing, and the money came. The money was given.

So, the books then came.

RL: Was it funded by a regents' discretionary fund?

Huff: I don't know that term. It was out of some regents' fund. I suppose that is what it's called, yes.

The Basic and Imazeki Collections

RL: Would you now describe the separate parts of the Mitsui collection.

Huff: Yes. There were seven. There was one part called the main or general collection, which was of many standard works in modern editions and some recent publications too; that is, early 20th century, first half. That we incorporated into our collection; that is, we classified the books in with others of the same subject. It had no particular focal point--except as having been what the Mitsuis chose. I imagine it was considered rather their reference library. It had not enough distinctive color to keep it as a part, though I met Japanese visitors over the years, some of whom regretted that, but I don't know why. We included with that the Imazeki collection, named after its collector.

The Japanese Manuscripts

Huff: Then there was the Japanese manuscript collection of over 2,000 titles, which is still uncatalogued. The rarest parts of it were collected by Motoori. In a later year, 1957, I was able to receive a special grant--this time it came through Washington--and had a librarian here from Kyoto working with me for a year going through it to cast out things of no importance, of which there were a few. Those were manuscripts, simply copies of articles from journals, and where we had the original in the printed form we cast the copy out. It was just a scribe's copy of no importance whatever.

Many of the manuscripts are quite rare. [Pauses to think] I'll remember the librarian's name--Ogura Chikao. Though he and I did not, in the year [1956-1957], couldn't finish the collection--he worked eight hours a day on it. I think we got about half way through. His notes should still be slipped inside the front cover of each of those books we went through, and they record what reference books he consulted and what things of special interest he found that he thought applied to the manuscript.

RL: Were his notes in English or Japanese?

Huff: Japanese. He spent all his evenings reading English detective stories, but, as he said, he could never learn to speak it; it was too difficult. [Laughter] He spoke some. Well, that was the manuscript collection.

The Asami Library of Korean Imprints

Huff: Then there was the Asami Library of Korean imprints. That had been formed by Asami Rintarō, a Japanese lawyer who lived in Seoul after the Japanese took over Korea in 1895. He remained in Seoul until about the time of the First World War and took a great interest in Korean printing, which, among the books printed in the Far East, shows some of the most elegant examples.

He brought the collection back with him, and I think that at the time of his death, after his death, his family sold it--that is my recollection--to the Mitsui family.

Huff: It was unbound; that is, it was in paper covers--beautiful cinnamon-colored oiled paper that the Koreans use for their bindings. I have none, I guess. No, I don't have any. We had t'ao, or chitsu, as the Japanese call them, the cloth-covered wrappers, made for them of the same color. It is quite a handsome collection. And we had title strips pasted on them without writing, and Ch'ung-ho Frankel wrote all the titles.

RL: How marvelous!

Huff: I have a picture, I think, of it someplace in my albums.

The other two famous collections of older Korean books are in the Tōyō Bunko in Tokyo, and in the very wealthy Tenri University, south of Kyoto.

RL: What were the approximate dates of the Korean collection?

Huff: Its most notable parts are not with the earliest--we don't have an example of the earliest movable type, which goes back to the 13th century, if I'm not mistaken. The notable parts, as Chaoying Fang determined them, and he is the one who worked on cataloguing it for two years, were its examples of movable type printing of the middle period; that is, 16th, 17th, and even 18th century.* Those had not been highly prized--it's so typical, I suppose in many parts of the world. It's exactly comparable to the early collectors of Chinese ceramics prizing only Sung ceramics because they were the earliest glazed porcelain identified. Collectors were interested in only the very early movable types, and so these later ones, while some of them are quite handsome, were not prized, and Asami had the wisdom to pick them up.

RL: What is the technical sense of the word "imprint"?

Huff: It's used to identify an edition, usually by name of publisher and date. The 1920 imprint is better than the 1950 imprint. It usually means edition too, but they aren't always identical.

RL: Was the collection on general subjects?

*Chaoying Fang, The Asami Library: a descriptive catalogue, edited by Elizabeth Huff, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969.

Celebrities of Korea, a work consisting of honor lists under twenty headings such as premiers, hereditary rank recipients, painters, Confucian scholars, temples to local celebrities, and so forth. These lists have been invaluable aids to quick reference. The book was first printed in 1804 at Chōngūp 忠邑 by Kim Sōng-ūn 金性允 (Kaidai misprints 貴 as 死). Our copy is from an indifferent re-engraving. It has the collector's seal of Kim Se-gyun 金世均 (1812-1879, *muungwa* of 1841)

19.3 *Kungwōnūi* 宮園儀. 1776. 2 vols. Movable type.

Rites and ceremonies at Crown Prince Changhōn's (1735-1762) temple and tomb. After King Chōngjo ascended the throne in 1776 he gave his father the posthumous title Changhōn Seja (莊獻世子), and his father's temple and tomb the names Kyōngmogung 景慕宮 and Yōngwōn 永源 respectively. The officials, especially those of the Board of Ceremonies, were ordered to draft a set of regulations on the ceremonies to be performed at these places so that the degree of respect, as expressed by the size of buildings, number of sacrificial dishes, and so forth, was just slightly beneath that paid to a king. After half a year's study the officials presented this work, *Kungwōnūi*, in two volumes, one of illustrations (圖說) and one of the text of the regulations (儀注 2 卷).

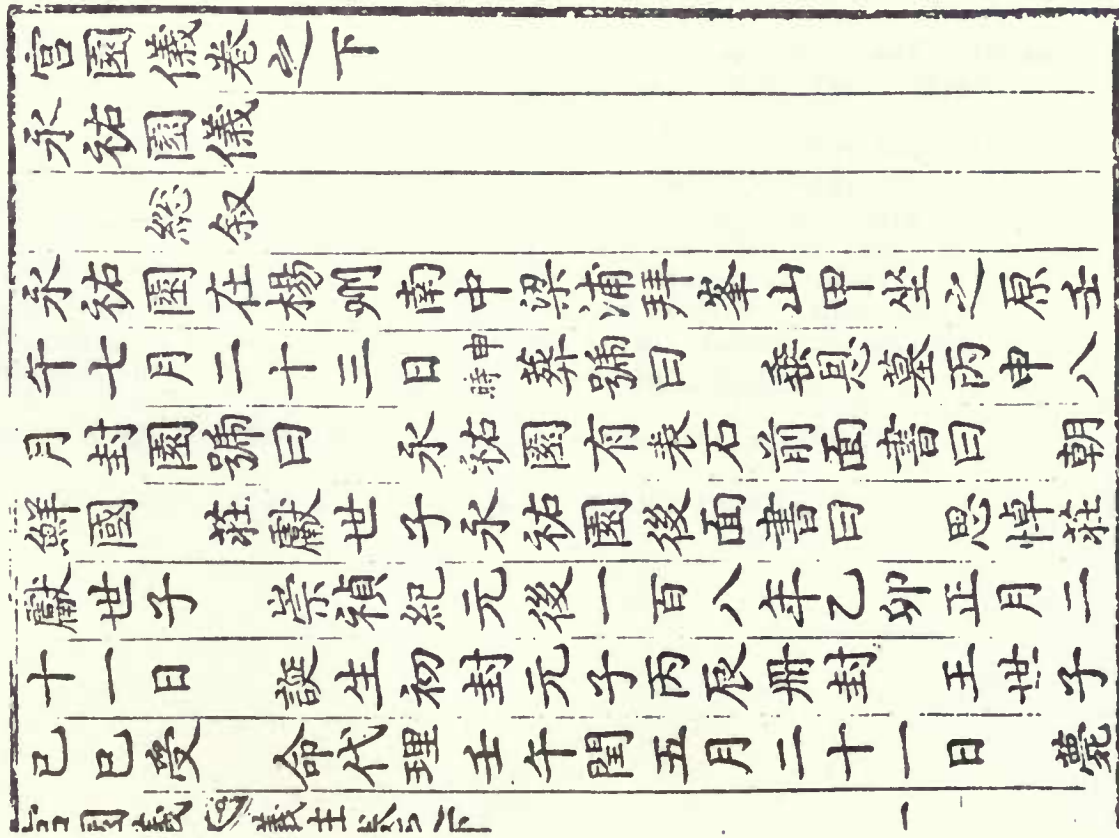
The king's preface to the work was written by Hong Kug-yōng 洪國榮 (1748-1780) and reproduced by engraving on wood. The rest of the text was printed late in 1776 with the 1772 *kabinija* font. There are records of an engraved edition of 1780 and a revised engraved edition of 1785.

Our copy is not only one of the rare movable-type editions of 1776, but also one with handwritten corrections and additions either on slips covering the text to be corrected or, in the case of single characters, on a square of paper pasted under the square hole where the wrong character had been excised. Some of the corrections are written on yellow slips pasted on the top margin. Between leaves three and four of the illustrations an entire double leaf of illustrations and captions in manuscript is inserted. This, then, is the unique collated copy from which the master copy for wood engraving was made.

19.4 *Samban yesik* 三班禮式. 1868. 1 vol. Woodblock.

Rules of etiquette for the officials of the three categories. Officials in Korea were primarily limited to the *yangban* (兩班) families only.

PLATE 2: Item 19.3; *Kungwōnūi*.



Huff: When the books were finally shelved, I and Charles Hamilton went through them and classified them according to the scheme of what was then the only, or certainly the only general, Japanese catalogue of a Korean library, or a Korean bibliography; it wasn't of a library. It was an unwieldy kind of scheme as it seems now, but it was retained in the printed catalogue.

Yes, it went through all subjects. It started out with the Chinese classics--there are editions of the Chinese classics there--and went on through history, biography, and so on.

I think there is only one book in ŏnmun, the Korean syllabary. Men, at least until the Japanese came in and then Japanese was taught in all the schools, wrote in Chinese, sometimes in a rather peculiar style, but often in extremely beautiful writing. They used manuscript calligraphy for engraved woodblocks and for fonts for movable type. Women were not considered, generally speaking, up to reading Chinese characters [laughter], and so they wrote in the syllabary, which is quite handsome.

RL: What was the paper like and was it in good condition?

Huff: Oh, yes. Grand paper. The best. As late as when I lived in Peking, the paper used for the windows in place of glass was called Ch'ao-hsien chih, Korean paper. It's strong, very well made, very tough.

RL: What's it made from, primarily?

Huff: [Pauses to think] I can discover; but I don't want to guess. [Miss Huff gave the following information in a later interview. Ed.]

You asked me the composition of Korean paper. I've had help on this. [Chuckle] From Choo Yong Kyu. Traditionally, this is the good old paper made of these ingredients: mulberry bark, rush, bamboo leaves, pine needles, and another kind of rush, and I can't distinguish between those from the characters, and I don't think I have a dictionary that would help me. Then, in the 15th century, a Korean traveler to China had learned to add raw hemp, and the resulting product is called Kao-li chih.

RL: That's really interesting, particularly the pine needles.

Huff: Yes! [Chuckle] That astonished me; I didn't know it.

Huff: The Koreans have carried movable type to its zenith, I think. The Chinese had experimented with it in the 11th century, first making it in clay. It couldn't be made accurately enough, precisely enough, to be held tight within the frame, and they gave that up, and then later used it in other materials from time to time, but not frequently and, in general, not as beautifully as the Koreans did.

Then when the Japanese went into Korea--when Hideyoshi's troops went in in the late 16th century, though they were in the end unsuccessful in taking the country, they pillaged a great deal and were amazed to see these types, because the Japanese were using, of course, woodblock prints. They took back whole fonts. And from about 1600 until about 1625, the Japanese published some books using movable types, and then cut it right off, no more. They're great rarities when you can find them.

RL: I imagine.

Huff: There are a few single examples of Korean types in the library collection, and one of them, an alloy, Sohn Pow Key took over to the laboratory and had a mineralogist friend of his analyze it, and there's a record of that there. If I knew chemistry, I'd find it interesting. He found traces of more than a dozen elements in it--different metals and chemicals.

RL: That's an extraordinary example of cultural diffusion that went so far and then stopped, I think.

Huff: Isn't it, yes.

What is the famous paper institute and laboratory in Appleton, Wisconsin? The founder of it, an American, has written books about paper. Dard Hunter! How could I have forgotten that?

It's a rather delightful small museum which has an account of Korean movable types and then illustrates--and this was some years ago I saw it; it may have been corrected--and then shows pictures of the famous woodblocks that still exist in the Haeinsa Monastery in South Korea, and the display is arranged in such a way that you think that those woodblocks are illustrating movable types. [Laughter]

RL: As I understand it, the difference was that a whole page would have had to be carved by the woodblock principle, enormously laborious?

Huff: Yes, though John Fryer in the late 19th century wrote that in China the books were run off by illiterate boys who, taking the completed block--well, the plain block was taken. A man with good penmanship, brushmanship, wrote the text to be reproduced on the double pages, which would later be folded. That was placed on top of the plain block, upside down, and the carver carved it. The paper was almost transparent. Then he scooped out the spaces between the strokes. Then that master was removed and a certain kind of powder was sprinkled on the block, and little boys, who earned the equivalent of twenty-five cents a day, ran off the pages. I've forgotten how many Fryer said they could run off in one day, but it was hundreds. Once it reached that stage, it was rapid. Then it was sent to the binder for folding and stitching and putting in soft paper covers.

Chōhyōkaku; The Chinese Rubbings Collection

Huff: Then there was the Chinese rubbings collection. You know what rubbings are?

RL: Yes. But what I don't know is what the rubbings were of, and as you tell me, perhaps you could describe what a rubbing is.

Huff: There is more than one method of making them. It is a paper copy of the inscription or bas relief sculpture that appears on stone monuments, and it always comes out white on a black ground, made on exceedingly thin paper. To be preserved it should be mounted.

For some years, it has been illegal because with much rubbing the monument is worn away. But the law wasn't enforced very well, at least early in this century, because rubbings were very easily come by in Peking, usually brought in from other parts of the country.

The number in the collection, with some duplication, was probably--yes, I think it was--close to 1,000. We arranged them, after we moved into Durant [Hall], on shelves in Room 7 in chronological order of the monuments, as far as it could be told. There were some that were not easily identifiable.

The first ones are most beautifully bound and clad in quilted covers and then inserted in beautiful hinoki [wood] boxes; the

Huff: earliest are three of the famous stone drums that are presumably Chou dynasty date, giving a text from the Shih-ching, the Book of Odes. And the rubbings then go on up into the Ch'ing dynasty monuments, though most of them are accounted for by the 13th, 14th centuries.

In later times, I think not later than the 12th century, it was conceived that to inscribe stone slabs or wooden blocks for the particular purpose of preserving the calligraphic style of a famous person would be a good idea, and that was done. From that time on, you come to have not only the big rubbings, sheets, but albums of them.

RL: When were most of the rubbings actually done?

Huff: I think that most remaining rubbings date from not earlier than the Ch'ing dynasty, 1644 on. The earliest one in the Mitsui collection is claimed to be, and we thought with some reason, a Ming dynasty rubbing--quite rare.

Around 1960, Kenneth Starr, who was then curator of the rubbing collection at the Field Museum of Natural History, which I think has changed its name--I can't keep up with them [laughter]-- had a grant to go to Formosa and study rubbing technique with one of the few remaining masters there. He wrote to me at that time, and wrote to, well, all of the prominent collections or libraries, and said that when he came back, he hoped to make a survey of the collections in this country, and he enclosed a questionnaire in several pages.

Ch'ung-ho Frankel, Chaoying Fang, and I gathered together a small but, I think, good collection of catalogues of rubbings, some in certain provinces and so on, certain types, and worked down with the rubbings in Room 7 to try to answer the questionnaire as fully as we could. It produced rather interesting results. And when Kenneth Starr returned and compared the replies he had, he wrote to me and said that while the Library of Congress collection is bigger, that ours, of all those in this country, represented the greatest--well, the Library of Congress is greater, and I think [the Chicago] Natural History Museum collection, made chiefly by [Berthold] Laufer, is bigger. He said that ours represented the greatest diversity of range in time, subjects, and provenance, though that picture may have changed.

Huff: For example, there were interesting things in it, such as a small album of Buddhist bronze statuettes--the face and then the reverse of them--and I've never seen another one like that.

RL: I've never seen rubbings of three-dimensional objects.

Huff: Oh.

Years later we bought one of the most famous collections of all small rubbings, hundreds of them, which came up for sale in Formosa at extremely reasonable or reasonably inexpensive cost. It is small objects like coins, seals; those are the two things I remember. The collection was made by Ch'en Chieh-ch'i, a 19th century scholar. It was a hobby of many literary people not only to collect interesting antiquities, small or large, but also to make rubbings, and to make in that way a kind of catalogue. Many of them did it in a very modest way.

All of these are on very thin tissue mounted on heavier sheets, and many of them have on that mounting a very fine note and then the seal of the original collector, and it's often a well known connoisseur. We identified many of them, as I remember.

RL: Who were the sorts of people who actually did the Ch'ing rubbings? Do we know that? It is quite hard manual work; I know because I've done it. Would scholars have done it, or would they have used their assistants or servants?

Huff: I know that in some cases scholars did. Certainly for rubbings brought onto the market in Peking in modern times, they're simply done by unlearned people who learned the craft, so to speak. I was reading recently of one of the great Sung dynasty authors who, when he went for relaxation to a certain Buddhist temple, would seize the opportunity to make a rubbing or two of some of the monuments.

RL: And for whom has this collection proved valuable? Who has used it in the library?

Huff: In my day, I can't remember its being used for research. I can remember Chinese scholars visiting, sitting down there in visible bliss--Hu Shih, Li Chi, the archeologist, Chiang Yee, people like that. But it may have been used since then. I don't know.

The Gakken Collection

Huff: I mustn't forget to mention the most distinguished Gakken collection of writings in Chinese by Japanese authors--old books, several thousand volumes. It has not yet been catalogued.

When Professor [Ching-mao] Cheng was here--he's by way of being an authority on the subject--he said that in his years in Japan--I don't know how many they were; he's a Chinese from Taiwan--he had spent a great deal of time in trying to buy those books for himself, and in all the book markets he'd been able to gather, as I recall his saying, only a dozen or two, they'd become so scarce. And he used this collection a great deal.

The Sōshin Map Collection

Huff: The map collection is another notable part, and that was started early, in Kyoto, by the member of the family who was described as being eccentric, and I think, as I said, a collection probably taken into the Tokyo Mitsui library only upon his death. The map collection was arranged also in Room 7 following the pattern of a standard Japanese atlas. All of these are maps of Japan--the whole of the country and then the smaller parts, islands, prefectures, and so on--and they were arranged in a geographical order within each division.

There are many woodblock maps. All the maps were printed by woodblock until the late 19th century after lithography was introduced. And I think that the Mitsui librarian continued the collection because there are some quite late ones--a few rather amusing tourist maps and some railroad maps, probably because the Mitsuis had railroad interests.

Those were used in my day quite a lot. Scholars writing on a certain event that took place in one of the prefectures, one particular area, would like to see a more or less contemporary map if we had it.

The earliest ones, I think there--the woodblock prints--are black and white. They came to be colored, of course. Many of them are quite artistic.

Games, Theater Programs, Miniature Books, and Picture Postcards

Huff: The same collector collected sheets of a game that was very popular in Japan called suguroku, which means "double six." [Chuckle] Anyway, the only comparable thing I can think of is our parcheesi. A player laid out the sheet, and then different players cast chips or something, and depending upon the places they rested, they won or lost. There were many themes for suguroku. One of the very most amusing of those sheets is one called Tetsudō suguroku, which means "railroad." [Laughter] It has all these strange little chaps in tails and Western hats standing around a station in Japan.

RL: How amusing!

Huff: It really is. [Laughter]

The same eccentric Mitsui collector in Kyoto was fascinated by steel engravings when that process was introduced, and especially the miniatures, miniature books. There's a shelfful and they're stacked, dozens of them. Such fine printing, and small illustrated books. Such fine printing. I don't know how anyone could read them. Maybe you couldn't without a magnifying glass! [Laughter]

RL: Were these Japanese classics or poems?

Huff: The ones I remember were sort of travel books on the beauties of such-and-such a place.

He also collected kabuki theatre programs. Those are quite interesting. Bright colors, done by woodblock, very thin--a few pages. Those date mostly from the Meiji period, but there may be a few earlier ones. We arranged those by the place of the theatre, many in Osaka--well, the place and the theatre.

He also collected--or I thought it was he--it came, I think, along with the miscellaneous things I've been speaking of--picture postcards. Hundreds of lovely Meiji picture postcards of all parts of Japan and festivals and pretty ladies. [Chuckle]

RL: What a wonderful trove for the folklorist or ethnologist.

Huff: Yes.

RL: Those must be hard to handle.

Huff: Yes. Well, along with the steel engraving books and the theatre programs, they're on a separate shelf in a closed cabinet.

RL: You must have had a most enormous feeling of accomplishment, didn't you?

Huff: Yes, I think I did. I have a marvelous photo of the crates, of dozens of the crates outside the back door of the library. Huge!

And then reporters started--after it was announced in the papers, reporters started coming here and taking pictures. And, of course, I was younger and more innocent then. I was old enough not to be so innocent, but I had had little to do with newspapers or journalists. I don't think there was a single account from here to the east coast that was entirely accurate. [Laughter] But I think I had made the statement that, "Probably our collection is now larger than the Oriental collection of any other university library in the country," which was true, I'm quite sure. And one of the reporters, in one of the less civilized parts of the country--it could have been Texas [laughter]--came out with an article headed: "UC East Asiatic Library Now Largest in the Country." Well, we would never approach, God being with us, the size of L.C.'s [Library of Congress'] Oriental collection. [Laughter] And Mary Wright referred to that at a meeting in the East, where I was not in attendance, but where a friend of mine was. He reported that she had referred to it and said, "You know how Californians exaggerate." [Laughter]

RL: Was she then at Stanford? [Laughter]

Huff: Yes, she was.

RL: Physically, what did you do with the Mitsui Library when it arrived? At least--what?--460 big cartons?

Huff: I think that was it. Crates. There was at that time a tunnel, as it was called, that led in from a door to the left of the photo lab door and wound its way through into the stack area. It was long and it had at least one bend.

RL: I believe that's where the mail facilities now are.

Huff: Well, the crates were stacked in there, leaving just barely enough space for a person to squeeze by, as I recall.

The Doe library annex had been built, just, and the lowest floor of the annex, at least on the south side, was empty; it had nothing in it and no shelving. Maryon Monahan conceived the idea--since I suppose it was a question of budget, waiting for permanent shelving, which was quite costly--of having carpenters set up temporary pine shelving, which was done, and then we shelved the books in as good order as we could by the original sections. And that's where we did our first classification of the Asami Library, and separation of parts, and bringing together of parts that had been separated some way or another.

Chinese Book Buying

RL: How did you try to build up the Chinese collection before and after the Communist takeover?

Huff: Yes. The Mitsui Library, of which we spoke, had thousands of Chinese books in it, of course. President Sproul in 1948 made two grants. I mentioned the one to Elizabeth McKinnon, for her use. She went over in '48. At about the same time a similar grant was made so that Richard Irwin could go to China. He went to Hong Kong. He established certain relationships there with good dealers, several of whom we continued to buy from for twenty years, and then made his way up to Shanghai, expecting, when he had exhausted, he thought, the possibilities there, to go on up to Peking. But in the spring--April, at least--of 1949, it became clear that the government was changing [chuckle], going to change, and in a sometimes rude way, and he was advised to leave the country while he was still in Shanghai. He was able to find passage on a United States Navy ship of some kind, which just happened to be in the Whangpoo harbor [of Shanghai], and he was one of the last to get out before the changeover.

But he was able to get the books out [948 wanted books in 26,000 volumes]. As I remember it, he was having them crated and shipped as he bought them; when he had a crateful, he shipped it, which was the sensible thing to do. As I remember the funds, they were about \$25,000 each for purchases, and then their travel expenses were paid.

RL: \$25,000?

Huff: That is my memory, and I think it is correct. I have a feeling against remembering quantities of books because of the insistence upon the importance of accession figures at the national library meetings. [Chuckle] I'm just so distressed by that year after year.

I mentioned Professor Bingham and Lessing, but I forgot to mention [Professor] Delmer Brown. He bought over three thousand wanted volumes for us in Japan, in 1948.

After the--well, of course, from that point on, we were really more or less limited for Chinese books to the Hong Kong dealers. They seemed always, over all the years--well, they were always--able to get certain things in from the mainland--not rare books, but some quite good ones.

RL: Are you speaking of current publications, or books that were published in the Republic or earlier?

Huff: Both. In fact, the Chi Ku Chai in Hong Kong, which was set up some time in the '50s, was a Communist bookstore, and it was able to bring in sets, for example, of old books, occasionally block prints, sometimes facsimiles, that had been printed in China proper, and we bought quite a lot from it. It was expensive, more expensive than some of the others.

RL: Were there any restrictions on libraries in the '50s that wished to buy Communist materials?

Huff: Yes. Our only connections after 1949 were exchange agreements with the National Library in Peking and the government printing house. The National Library sent us lists and we sent them lists of titles available. We sent them chiefly university publications, mainly scientific, I think, and we chose from their lists.

That was a very difficult thing to initiate because Mrs. Dorothy B. Keller, head of the Acquisition Department, made inquiries to discover whether or not university libraries might purchase books from China, and it turned out that if someone in the library--and that became I--could estimate the number of U.S. dollars that could be well spent on those publications in a year, that then Mrs. Keller might every year apply to the United States Treasury Department for a permit, which she did and which we always received.

- Huff: I think the first year I may have underestimated, but I think the sum rounded off pretty well and successfully and adequately at about \$3,000. Publishing, obviously, didn't burgeon in China immediately after the change. There was to be confusion in the change, of course.
- RL: So, what I hear you saying is that the U.S. restriction formally was a currency restriction, and that there were no restrictions on content. Is that correct?
- Huff: That we put none on content. Certain things from China, I am certain, were never offered to us.
- RL: Did the American government put any restrictions on titles or the sorts of materials that you could buy from mainland China?
- Huff: No. A large part of what we were offered was, again, scientific. Quite early the Chinese began publishing glossaries in the natural sciences, and those we were most eager to have because some of the terms were new, too new to be in the dictionaries we then had, or dictionaries that had then been published. Those were much in demand.
- RL: Am I right in assuming that your currency restriction did not apply to Communist materials that you bought in Hong Kong?
- Huff: That's true, yes.
- RL: Did you buy Chinese Communist materials in Europe at all, as many scholars did?
- Huff: Oh, yes. We did. What was the first one that opened in London-- Collett's?
- RL: That's right.
- Huff: And later they branched out and offered figurines and all sorts of things.
- RL: Yes. There were some lovely things. Nothing very rare or choice, but interesting. Scrolls.
- Huff: Yes, in the later '50s or early '60s in Peking, fascimile scrolls began to be offered, and some quite elegant ones. We bought them too. When Professor [James] Cahill came here, one of the things

Huff: that pleased him most was our collection of facsimile scrolls, both Chinese and Japanese.

RL: What about book purchasing in Taiwan? When did that begin to develop as a source for the library?

Huff: I remember little about the purchases there until Robert Irick persuaded the Association for Asian Studies to subsidize the establishment of a publishing house for facsimile editions in Taipei with the assurance that after a certain period of time--two or three years; I'm not certain--it would be self-supporting. As far as I know, he's still there.

A good deal of that operation is suspect, but he or one of his Chinese assistants managed to find in collections on the island quite a number of scarce gazetteers, and he started to issue a series, which may still be continuing, of reproductions of old gazetteers from all parts of China, and we bought all of those, I think. We probably have a complete set. They were badly done. They have to be used with the greatest caution. Parts of a very long gazetteer, for example, might come out in what would appear to be the original order, but, in fact, wasn't. It was a matter of convenience, probably. Also, our cataloguers discovered that sometimes the title page reproduced in the facsimile was indeed the title page of that particular gazetteer, but not of that edition--a hundred or two hundred years earlier or later.

RL: Why was that done?

Huff: [Chuckle] All we could assume was that it was because the copy they had had no title page, you see, and the publishers would write to this country or some place, to get a copy of the title page of that gazetteer regardless of the edition.

RL: Were there any other areas in which it was a suspect operation?

Huff: I think it was just on the eve of my first retirement that a former student of mine, Jerome Cavanaugh, who was then perhaps teaching at Stanford or studying for his Ph.D. perhaps, himself a good bibliographer, a tall American chap, came up. He was about to go back to Formosa--he was spending then at least half his time in Taipei--he came up to look at our duplicates. I tried to keep duplicates cleared out as much as I could because they took up room. He selected quite a number that he wanted and I sold them to him. I said, "By the way, don't take the books that you are borrowing to Taiwan."

RL: Why not?

Huff: Because the library did not lend books overseas. And a year or more later, Charles Hamilton learned, probably from Christa Chow, then senior Chinese cataloguer, that fascimile editions of--I think it was all--three books had come into the library, having been ordered by the bibliographer, and that so careless was the operation in Taiwan that the ownership stamp--General Library, University of California, Berkeley--was still plainly readable on the first page of each volume!

RL: [Laughter] So, your student had in fact taken them to Taiwan.

Huff: Yes. I don't remember even the name of another, of a bookdealer in Taiwan. I think it couldn't have been a very large trade. Of course, we had catalogues from dealers in Japan, which offered Chinese works, and I read those catalogues myself and then checked what seemed to me interesting titles to have them run through the catalogue.

RL: In reading the annual reports as we move into the '60s, I note that the buying becomes more and more competitive and that it got harder and harder to secure books even using telegrams because the demand for Asian books had increased so much with the spread of Asian studies, libraries starting out, and purchasers interested from Europe as well as from America. Did you feel that the East Asiatic Library remained competitive?

Huff: Yes. We felt at first a false [chuckle] security because catalogues from the Orient should have reached us before they reached the east coast. But then I learned to my horror that--I think it was--Mr. A.K. Chiu at Harvard was cabling and we weren't; we were just using air mail letters. And I think it's true also that some of the other libraries were not so, shall I say, stuffy or careful as I. If the bibliographer of another library saw something that looked choice, he wouldn't always stop to check. Many librarians, you know, accept duplicates. Luckily, I've forgotten in which library it was that one of us traveling in the East one spring had seen three or four copies of the same Japanese work classified in three different parts of one library. [Laughter]

I never had, I think, certainly not in the years we're speaking of, as great an amount to spend as Harvard and Chicago, for example, but I was generously treated proportionately. I always felt that

Huff: I was.* At the monthly staff meetings in the rare book room, when I knew the budget for the coming year, I would explain it to all the staff, and some of them would object that it wasn't enough. Then I'd point out what the other departments and branches had.

The Korean Collection and the Farmington Plan

RL: Then Korean materials. Was anybody pressing for collection of Korean materials?

Huff: None of the faculty, so far as I can recall. The graduate student who stands out in using Korean materials was the now professor of Korean at Columbia, Gari Ledyard. I used to keep parts of the Korean collection, as he needed them, in my office, which was the only office that was locked at night, and then he would take them in the morning to the reading room and spend all day with them.

I thought that since we had that base that we should buy for the main stack. I think the first person to help me, because I was quite hopeless and helpless in regard to Korean authors, scholars, and so on, was Sohn Pow Key. He drew up beautiful lists and also corresponded with dealers that he knew to be trustworthy. And we were made, when the Far East was drawn into the Farmington Plan system, we were made then the United States library responsible for current Korea. I can't say now, of course, anything about the use of it. But Michael Rogers has taught Korean all along, and now John Jamieson is also teaching it.

RL: Looking through the annual reports, I saw that you had a great deal of difficulty in purchasing in Korea and in receiving books that you had ordered.

Huff: We did. It was my feeling that the development of regular supply of books abroad had not reached anything like the sophistication that it had in Japan or even in China. Sohn Pow Key and Choo Yong Kyu

*But "The Library will stumble or halt but by that degree to which low, confining book funds fetter it." E.A.L. Annual Report, 1963-1964.

Huff: have both told me that there is, among Korean businesses like that, much more laissez-faire [laughter] than order.

RL: You mentioned the Farmington Plan. I'm not familiar with that.

Huff: I can't give you the history of it. There is a--I left the book I was given explaining the whole history of it in the Library. It was started not long after the end of World War II by a group of librarians meeting in the East, university librarians. It's possible that it was Mr. Metcalf, then director of the Harvard Libraries, that initiated the idea. Because when we entered the war, there was discovered among the libraries in this country, including the Library of Congress, a lamentable lack of current publications in many European areas. I suppose it was easier to find readers of those languages than it was the books, oh, in the Baltic area, for example, probably Finnish--I don't know. So, it was suggested that libraries in this country divide among them the countries where we needed to step up current acquisitions, and that was done, I think, with what promised to be and perhaps has turned out to be quite good coverage.

It must have been a hardship on the Acquisition Department and the Cataloguing Department, because one had to have, if not native, well accomplished readers of those languages, many of them rather obscure.

Quite a lot later--I suppose a few years later--when the machinery was rolling well, it was decided to bring in Oriental countries. India I'm quite certain was brought in, and for the Far East we were given Korea. Perhaps Japan and China were not considered to be needed, and as far as I know they weren't. And it was in that field rather than the older Korean book field that we had the difficulties. The dealers' lists weren't good, and it was no use writing and saying, "Please note the place and date of publication." [Laughter] And so often it seems to me that we developed the habit of ordering more titles than we might otherwise have done in view of the limitation of the funds because we knew that we wouldn't get all the books. They would reply, "Such-and-such out of print," when it couldn't have been. Unless the editions were very small, it couldn't have gone out of print.

RL: Were you given funds outside of the normal university funding for purchases?

Huff: No, no. Each university took that financial responsibility.

RL: So, has that made Berkeley the strongest library in modern Korean material in the country?

Huff: It may have done. As I think I've mentioned, Mr. Chiu at Harvard was so taken aback that we had suddenly become possessors of a great Korean collection that he immediately employed a Korean bibliographer and set about acquiring. I doubt that he went into current publications, but I don't know, except in relation to literature and history possibly. The Korean bibliographer he'd got stopped by in Berkeley and looked at the Asami collection. It must have been between '57 and '61, I think. Well, '60 or '61. Chaoying Fang was then working on the draft of the Asami catalogue. Then Mr. Kim went on to Los Angeles, en route to Harvard.

One day in the office I had a long distance call from Los Angeles, and it was Mr. Kim. He said, "I'm going to Harvard to build a great Korean collection." I said, "Yes, I heard that, and I'm very happy for you." And he said, "Well, I just want to say one thing." I'm not being nearly as brusque as he was. He said, "I just want to say one thing before I leave. You've got a Chinese working on Korean books in Berkeley, and no Chinese knows anything about them." Typical!

RL: [Laughter] Oh, dear.

Huff: Not of people like Sohn Pow Key.

RL: No.

Huff: Or Choo Yong Kyu.

George Kerr's Formosan Collection

Huff: I cannot recall whether I told you of a purchase of some importance, though not compared to later ones, of George Kerr's Formosa collection, a Japanese collection on Formosa.

RL: No, you didn't mention that.

Huff: It was quite early on, '48 or '49. He was then teaching at Seattle. And it's still probably the most extensive collection of Japanese books on the subject of Formosa. It was largely unbound. I've

Huff: forgotten, but it seems to me there were almost 1,000 volumes, most of them Western style volumes, paperbound--an immense binding job. But it has been used--had been used, the last I knew--a great deal, because word went around then, and students far and near writing on the subject--and Formosa, of course, in those years was of some interest [chuckle]--wrote either to borrow on inter-library loan or to have photocopies made.

Library of Congress Duplicate Collection of Captured Japanese Books

Huff: After the war ended, the military, I suppose it was, turned over to the Library of Congress I don't know how many, probably hundreds of enormous mail sacks--they looked to me like mail sacks--of Japanese books that had been confiscated. Needless to say, they were simply jammed with duplicates within the group.

So, the Library of Congress invited librarians from Oriental collections all over the country to choose from their staffs and send one or more persons to select books they might want for their own collection. So, Charles [Hamilton] spent the summer of '49 there, and later we sent Keiko Imamura, who was on our staff.

Charles selected, I think it was, close to 3,000 volumes. Well, at the end of the summer, all those people working together hadn't made much impression on the volume of materials there. I think each library had its own section of shelving with its name on it, and at the end, Charles--and I daresay he was typical of them--before the books were to be sent, Charles made a note of the incomplete sets, and some of those books were so valuable that even an incomplete set you couldn't resist. The assumption was that when the project was completed, the other parts of the sets would probably turn up. Well, they surely never have. On the other hand, I imagine that there are dozens and dozens of those bags that haven't yet been opened.

RL: Where did the books come from?

Huff: They must have been brought over by the military.

RL: What you might call war loot, then?

Huff: Oh, it was. But how to send it back...There was no way of knowing, I'm sure, where any sackful came from. Some of the books, I remember, had a stamp, an ownership stamp, rubber, saying it was a school in Tokyo, a school or an institute of learning in Tokyo. They didn't treat their books very well. The stamps were smudged and blotted on some of them that I saw. And there were lots of things that--oh, there'd be ten copies of a 1945 telephone directory of Tokyo and things like that. [Laughter]

RL: Were these distributed to the libraries at no cost other than shipping? Or did the Library of Congress sell them?

Huff: No, no. They were free. Our only cost was the loss of Charles' time from Berkeley and his travel. I think Mr. Coney requested a travel grant and received it for him.

RL: About how many volumes did you get out of this?

Huff: . After duplicates--there were a few duplicates--Charles couldn't help that--I should say more than 2,000. It was worth it. We thought it was worth it.



The move to Durant Hall. Chute into Dr. Huff's office with tote boxes being hauled in.



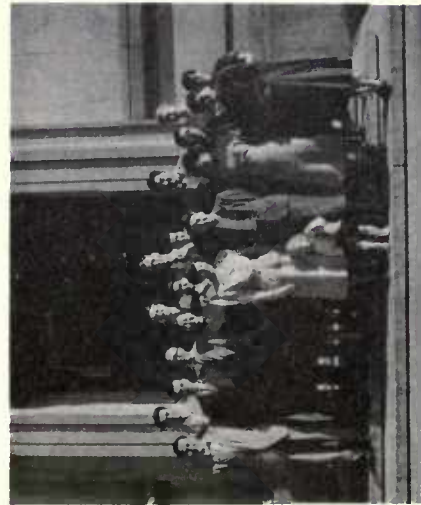
University Librarian Donald Coney (left) and Ray Wood, 1949.



Cramped cataloguing room in the Main Library. Left to right: Richard Irwin, Charles Hamilton, Paul Chen, Ch'ung-ho Frankel, and Kiyoko Yamada.



Dr. Elizabeth Huff between two Korean librarians at Seoul National University.



Staff photograph, East Asiatic Library, 1957.



Professor Peter A. Boodberg, June 1971.

VII RUNNING THE EAST ASIATIC LIBRARY

Permanent Quarters: The Move to Durant Hall, 1952

Huff: Then in November of 1951 the law school and law library left Durant Hall for their new quarters, and the building was redecorated. All the furniture was refinished. We kept the original furniture. It was much nicer than the metal furniture that was then being bought for offices. In the first two weeks of February of 1952, owing chiefly to Maryon Monahan's synchronization of the whole operation, and Glen Grosjean's and Al Dien's supervising and marking the tote boxes that were filled to be carried, and then marking the empty shelves in Durant--in only two weeks, after those preparations, the whole collection, upstairs and downstairs, was moved into place.

RL: An extraordinary logistic operation.

Huff: Yes, I think it was, and I have marvelous pictures of the move.

RL: Was it all human power?

Huff: No. The boys brought the tote boxes out from the stacks, down the elevator and, below, through the tunnel. Men from Buildings and Grounds--in those days they were called laborers; I don't know what they are called now--loaded them into a huge truck. Two were kept going. The truck went just across the street, diagonally, backed toward the building, and a metal conveyor belt, which had been attached inside the window of what was to become my office, carried the tote boxes into that room, where the men on the staff met them, looked at the p-slips tacked onto them, and took them to the places where they should be shelved in Durant, and returned the empty tote boxes.

Space, Shelving, and Storage

The shelves told the bibliographers what books might not be bought; the cataloguers transcendently affected blindness.

E.A.L. Annual Report, 1958

It was a good year in every way but one: new books received no welcome, for there was no space.

E.A.L. Annual Report, 1960

Outrageous, near tumbled crowding of books on the shelves.

E.A.L. Annual Report, 1962

RL: Would you tell me about your problems in the E.A.L. with space and shelving when you moved down to Durant Hall?

Huff: Oh, yes. We had no space problems in the Doe building when we were there because half of the south side of the ninth tier had been cleared; the shelves had been cleared for us. And by the time we had brought together the Chinese and the Japanese books, which had been spread out by class, it was a comfortable amount of space with, as I remember it, two rows of sections--some people call them cases; standard library shelving, the shelves three feet wide and usually six to seven shelves apart--for sorting, oh, gifts that came in, journals to be collated before they were prepared for binding, and such things.

When we moved into Durant, as I said earlier, members of my staff had prepared the move very carefully, marking shelves in Durant and marking the shelves in the Doe building and then marking the tote boxes, each of which held a shelf of books, so that the spacing was even. When the move was completed, we discovered that about three-quarters of the shelf space was filled, and Mrs. [Helen M.] Worden at that time said, "Well, that's full by normal library standards, but you do have enough space to hold you for a few years."

I don't remember in which year it was that there was no longer any space. I speak always of the main collection, not any of the rare book collections in the basement. We were given the sixth and then unoccupied tier of the fairly new Biology Library stack, and went through the circulation records for two years and put there, in the Biology Library, those classes of books or sections of classes that were least often lent.

RL: How was this move received by your clientele?

Huff: Not very comfortably, because we could not afford the staff time to keep that section open more than, I think it was, two hours a day. I had to send a person over, a person who had been trained in circulation routines and a certain amount of reference, to open the floor, the tier, and receive readers.

Edward Schafer was the most displeased because the books least frequently borrowed were in the sciences and those books were important to him in his studies.

Then we spilled over into Richmond. I don't remember in which year it was. We were hideously overcrowded in Durant. Of course, the majority of the new acquisitions each year were books to be classified in Durant, not in Biology, so Biology wasn't overflowing, but Durant was.

The university purchased the old Ford plant in Richmond. When it was first opened, nothing was assigned to a large part of it. It was a vast expanse, a cement floor and four walls and nothing else. The library was able to be given the use of that space, and Mrs. Monahan had temporary shelving put in, and we put out there all of the uncatalogued books we still had on hand. There are still many there, I suppose. Many of them were parts of the Mitsui collection that were not rare books and were not of either of those parts that were merged into our own main collection. One special collection, the Gakken, of Chinese writings by Japanese authors, went to Richmond. The year of that probably appeared in the annual reports, but I don't remember. It must have been in the late '50s or early '60s.

And as far as I know, that situation remains the same, except that Durant is again overcrowded, vastly overcrowded, [laughter] and I think the collections in Biology--catalogued, all of them-- and in Richmond probably are about as they were when I left them.

RL: What did it mean to a reader who wanted something from Richmond?

Huff: It meant leaving a call slip. We had a temporary catalogue of the uncatalogued books with location numbers, and there was a file of that, of course, also in Richmond, where there was a small reading room and an attendant. It meant that the person wishing a book from Richmond would fill out a call slip in Durant. That call slip would be given to the desk attendant. At the end of the day,

Huff: however many there were would be given to a chap in the receiving room in Doe. Those would be given to the driver of the truck who drove up every day to return books to Richmond--not only from our library; the main library gradually got into that too--and in the afternoon bring back the ones requested. So, the person usually had to wait something over twenty-four hours for his book.

RL: A very minor inconvenience, then.

Huff: It seems to me so, yes, and I don't remember that people complained very much.

RL: Did you have any specific problems, problems specific to the storage of Oriental materials?

Huff: Only in regard to those items which we set aside before the move into Durant as either rare or normally unshelvable--the rubbings collection, the map collection, the scroll and facsimile scroll collection. We had to shelve all of them in a different kind of way from the way in which we shelved ordinary books. The shelving of Oriental books in standard form, whether they were bound in Western style or in t'ao, made no difference because the range of size of all of them was about the same.

RL: And how did you solve the problems of the other materials?

Huff: For the maps, we established Room 6 as the map room and requested and received conventional steel map cases of three different sizes, I believe.

For the scrolls, in Room 7, we, at Mrs. Monahan's suggestion, had the shelving on the north side of the room doubled in depth so that the scroll boxes wouldn't project beyond the shelf.

The rubbings were so various in their forms--some in boxes, some not, some very wide. We were able to accommodate them on the south wall of that room simply by shelving them in chronological order and in the way in which each one best fitted the shelf. It didn't really much matter which end was forward or whether it was sideways or anything like that.

RL: Did you ever have any problems with insect infestations or other problems with your books from the Orient?

Huff: I think I mentioned the fact that Tony [Trinidad], the custodian, had found a goldfish in the--

RL: A goldfish! No!

Huff: A silverfish! [Laughter] I'm mixing my metals. A silverfish in the ladies' room one day.

I think I told you about the librarian at Tongguk University in Seoul. The reading room desks were similar to those in our library, divided into two lateral parts, with a horizontal barrier between them and with lamps as they are in our reading room. But the barriers had a rather wider coping, and on each of them there were two or three goldfish bowls with goldfish darting about.

RL: How lovely! You didn't tell me that.

Huff: Silverfish was the only infestation we had. When Tony discovered that, we were supplied with silverfish poison, little yellow packets, that we continually--I think Tony changed them once a month--kept every three feet or so on the lower shelves of the books in the rare book rooms. We never detected anything upstairs in the main stack.

Tony always came to my office at 4:45 p.m., when he reported for work. He would come to my door and bow slightly, and I would say, "Good evening." Apparently, one day he came extra quietly and it was several minutes before I looked up.

Tony said, "Are you one of them Buddhists?" I said, "No, why do you ask?" He looked relieved and answered, "Oh, you always pick up them books with both hands." And it's true--I usually do pick up t'ao with two hands. I think I learnt that in Japan.

Staffing a Far Eastern Library

RL: How did you go about recruiting the staff that you needed to work under Charles [Hamilton] and Richard [Irwin]? You've mentioned one case where a golden apple fell out of the sky.

Huff: Oh, yes. There was never any want of applicants. Well, let me say first that I had the ideal, which was pretty well realized, of keeping a good balance among Chinese, Japanese, and American

Huff: employees. (I read a most poignant article on how the South Americans and others hate our referring to ourselves as Americans.) [Chuckle] And then later, of course, when we began to acquire Korean books, when the Asami Library came, I didn't expect to have as many Koreans on the staff because I knew that the Korean collection couldn't ever approach the volume of the Chinese and Japanese, but I doubt a week ever passed that I didn't have a call or a letter from an Oriental person, usually in the Bay Area, sometimes from as far east as New York--I remember one from Syracuse University--asking for work. Some of those were people with library school degrees, and some were not. If there was an opening at the time, I always interviewed the person. I can't remember, with two exceptions, engaging anyone without an interview, but I may be wrong in that.

After the move to Durant, I think probably Charles and I agreed that we would certainly try to work things out in a way that would give him only professional librarians as cataloguers, and that was with one exception accomplished. Paul Chen was there. Christa Chow wrote from Seattle. I did not interview her, so there's an exception, and she turned out to be one of the best cataloguers in the world.

Then we engaged two Japanese cataloguers. My friend Jack [George] Kerr, on a plane flying into San Francisco from Japan or Honolulu, happened to sit next to a young Japanese man, and he turned out to be a librarian who was working in the East cataloguing mostly Western works. Jack told him before he went on East to come in and talk to me, which he did. Arthur Miyazaki is his name. He is still there, a very good cataloguer.

Then another graduate of the University of Illinois Library School, Yuki Monji, came to share the office with Arthur, so we then had two Chinese and two Japanese cataloguers. Charles by then was chief of the catalogue division. I had organized the library by that time into divisions.

RL: What were they?

Huff: Cataloguing, current serials, reference, circulation, and binding.

But, before I go on, I would like to recall some other staff members. There was Yeh Te-lu, a scholar, who came to us in 1949, and died that same year. Olinda Lee was in the circulation division. She's now a school teacher in Berkeley. William Osuga and Emiko Moffitt who are librarians at U.C.L.A. and Hoover respectively.

Huff: Hugh Burleson is now with the State Department and Hiroko Ikeda, Harry Nishio, and Yuki Suzuki are teaching at various universities. Chang-su Swanson is at the Smithsonian. Then I mustn't forget Janet Krompart, whose husband took his Ph.D. in Chinese history at Berkeley. She is an incomparable librarian and personality who's now at Oakland University in Michigan.

RL: You told me that in the first decade of your administration you had no shortage of people applying for jobs, but did the situation continue? As more and more institutions started Oriental collections or expanded existing ones, did you have pressure on qualified staff, and could you pay competitive salaries here?

Huff: Oh, yes. I'm certain, with the possible exception of the Library of Congress. I don't know about their scale. The Library of Congress tried its best, or the officers there, to get Charles. They knew they'd have a prize. They offered him more money than he was receiving here, I think.

I can't remember that the number of applicants was reduced. It wasn't noticeably, I'm sure. I kept applicants' letters for quite a long time. I received some very charming ones, [laughter] and also some very funny ones.

RL: And did you in general feel that you got the sort of support from the General Library in terms of budget so that you could give adequate promotions?

Huff: Yes. Of course, there was--and there still is, I daresay--a system of review of performances at given intervals, and also--I've forgotten how eligibility for promotion was determined [chuckle], but Mr. Coney was very generous.

I shall never forget a scene in the old cage elevator in the Doe building. After the arrival of the Mitsui Library, not long after it, Charles Hamilton, Elizabeth McKinnon, and I all received a short memo from Mr. Coney, and each of us had been promoted, Charles from Librarian I to Librarian II. We were in the elevator going out to lunch and Charles hadn't opened his envelope. He'd thrust it in his pocket, and he opened it in the elevator. As we sank to the basement, Charles let out a scream that could have been heard on the top floor and said, "What have I done to earn this?" [Laughter] It was touching. It was absolutely touching!

RL: You wanted to tell me about Miss Li Chi?

Huff: Yes. Not very long after the moving of the library to Durant Hall, Professor Chen Shih-hsiang came into my office one day and said that he had a friend who'd just come to this country. Her assets had been frozen, I believe, in Hong Kong, and she was in need of work. She had graduated from a Chinese university, then had taken her master's degree at Oxford, and had published translations of English poets. Wordsworth, I believe, was one of them. But now she was strapped, and couldn't I give her some work? And I was able to give her some work from my general assistance budget.

One day her buzzer was sounded. (When a telephone call came in for anyone, he heard his own Morse code buzzer signal.) So, she excused herself--she was in my office--and went down to the telephone in the hall. She came back in a few minutes and went on working. She was working with cards. Oh, she was indexing a catalogue; yes, indexing the voluminous catalogue of the Kiangsu Provincial Library.

And soon she looked up and said, "You know David Selznick, don't you?" And I said, "No...he's associated, I think, with the moving picture industry." She said, "That was his secretary." [Laughter] I said, "Why, Miss Li! What did she want?" She said, "She said that she wanted me to come down to Hollywood for a month to teach Jennifer Jones how to speak English as a Chinese woman with a Mandarin accent would who had taken a degree at Oxford." I said, "How perfectly marvelous, Miss Li!" I could see the bank account piling up. She said, "I refused." I said, "You refused? I could arrange to bring you back here, though you wouldn't want to come back after an experience like that. What excuse did you give?" She said, "I told them I would rather work for you."

RL: [Laughter] Oh, how marvelous!

Huff: Wasn't that sweet! So, I persuaded her to go, and she went, and she had a lovely time.

RL: What movie was that?

Huff: It was "Love is a Many-Splendored Thing," by Han Suyin. One of those sad stories about a Chinese girl marrying an English reporter, or something like that. I didn't see it.

RL: You didn't see the movie?

Huff: No. I should have made an effort, but I didn't.

They put Miss Li up in the Ambassador Hotel, and then she was driven to Jennifer Jones' house for the teaching lessons.

RL: And then she got into the academic world, did you say?

Huff: She came back to the library for a while and was, quite luckily for her, I think, taken onto the staff of the Center for Chinese Studies. Several of her books were issued, small publications, but some, on language and...[goes to try and find books]. Well, I can't turn it up right now. [Returns]

She plunged into something that I should have thought would be boring to her--the Chinese language as it was being used and changed by the Communist government.

RL: And then did she go up to Vancouver?

Huff: I think she taught first at Michigan and then at the University of British Columbia.

RL: That's a distinguished career.

Huff: Yes.

Cataloguing the Collection

Cataloguing arrears are things the dreariest dreams are made of.

E.A.L. Annual Report, 1963

RL: When you came, it seems to me that one of the major decisions facing you was the problem of cataloguing the collection. I took a quotation from one of your reports, and it says, "A library catalogue is a way to find a book to read in silence. One who can read his book, mispronounce as he will its author's name, can find and read the catalogue card which describes that book."

Huff: Yes, which describes it and tells its location by the call number.

RL: In your first letter to Mr. Coney, you also stated that the library's priorities had to be cataloguing and ordering. I was going to ask you, in 1947 what Western models were available for cataloguing materials in Oriental languages, and how you proceeded with your task?

Huff: I proceeded, having never been inside a library school, along the lines of Mr. Chiu's recommendations and his catalogues at Harvard. He very kindly, after I had finished my degree [Ph.D.] in February or March, offered to teach me Oriental librarianship as he saw it if I'd stay two weeks longer in Cambridge, which I did, and went every day to the library.

Of course, I knew the library fairly well [chuckle], but he showed me how it was operated--himself, the Chinese bibliographer, the Japanese bibliographer, and cataloguing staff. The most extensive notes I made were about the catalogues, because I felt tremendously ignorant. I knew how to use one of his.

At that time, Mr. Chiu had, I believe, ten catalogues, but no subject catalogue. Ours was the first such to be started and to be made in an Oriental collection. He had a catalogue made as at that time the others in the country, probably all of the others in this country, were made; that is, in romanization. His language catalogues were separate, the Chinese, Japanese, and so on.

Then for the Chinese he had also a catalogue in character, which is the one that I and Fannie Chude and others always used because we soon learned that it was much more dependable than the romanized one. Of course, the Wade-Giles system of romanization, which was then the one used everywhere in England and America, has never been thought by any proper linguistic student to be any good. But it became so widespread after it was developed in the 19th century that students simply learned it.

Mr. Chiu also explained to me the shelf list. I had never heard of a shelf list [laughter], and I am grateful to him always for having spared me what would have been unspeakable embarrassment in the face of Mr. Coney. [Laughter]

Mr. Chiu's office was large. I think the bibliographers shared his office with him. And the only thing that I should have criticized--but I didn't, of course, to him--there was that he kept the important, and that means several thousand volumes, items of bibliographic use in his office. I thought that was a hardship on the students, so I

Huff: never kept any part of the collection, except for files and annual reports and such things, in my office.

RL: Could Harvard students use the bibliographic reference works?

Huff: If they knocked on his door and were admitted and asked him. That may be changed, of course. He retired years ago.

When I came out here, the catalogue of the Chinese collection was in Room 416, then the Oriental Languages Department seminar room, and I spent, it must have been, several days studying it. There were both characters and romanization, and I can't recapture in my mind the picture exactly of how the cards looked.

The books in the field of humane studies were in that same room.

RL: What do you mean by "humane studies"?

Huff: Well, humanities. Language, literature, history, primarily, along with encyclopedias. None of the science books. Those were distributed, catalogued in the main library and distributed in the stack. All the Japanese books were distributed through the main stack and, I think the cards were entirely in romanization.

Huff: Well, it took most of the summer for Elizabeth McKinnon and me to collect all the books from the stack and put them on trucks and bring them up to the space that had been cleared for us on the ninth tier.

Word had got around. I suppose it had been in C.U. News that the library would be established. Mr. Bingham, Mr. Boodberg, and Mr. Coney, before I came, had fixed the name of the library, not one that I would have chosen, but I'm glad it was before "Asian" replaced "Asiatic"; I prefer the Latin word.

RL: What would you have preferred?

Huff: Probably "Far Eastern," though one can object to that on certain grounds too, but one can object to any name.

Not more than a week or two after I arrived and when I was still studying the Chinese catalogue in the seminar room, a youth in very tight jeans--you may cross that out if you wish, but I was much impressed--came in and said, "I shall be in library school

Huff: in the fall. I am now working in the Documents Department and I read Japanese and if you have an opening for a student any time, may I be considered?" And it was, of course, Charles Hamilton.

I suppose that I received my budget July 1 [1947] or around about that time, and I can't remember at all what it was, but there was an amount for general assistance, which was the fund, of course, to be used for students and others. I think Charles was the first general assistance employee.

By the fall, we had set up--and where had we set up the Chinese catalogue? I think in that tiny room that later when we moved was given to Bancroft, the one with the one high window. And I was able to acquire another card filing cabinet, a small one [2'x3'], in which we began to file the cards we received from the Library of Congress. We subscribed to them very early, and that was the beginning of what is now a very, very large union catalogue, which has cards from many places in it, Japan and others, and the Library of Congress.

I had decided not to use the Library of Congress classification system or the Dewey Decimal, but to use Mr. Chiu's, which had been published some years before. It worked quite well. It's based primarily upon the traditional Chinese ssu pu system; "four classes" it means in this case, or "sections."

He had developed it over many years and had expanded it in a sense at intervals to include Japanese, because there are many types of literature in Japan that didn't exist in China.

RL: What were your grounds for rejecting the Library of Congress and the Dewey Decimal systems?

Huff: My study of them perhaps wasn't extensive enough, but I thought them not as readily applicable to the kinds of materials we'd be collecting as Mr. Chiu's. We, of course, over the years, have had to make further refinements in his, as the Hoover Library also had to do.

RL: If you had to do it over again now with what you know of library systems and with the Communist materials which were not in at that time, would you change your approach?

Huff: Yes. I had no idea in 1947 that the library would become either large or of much importance. [Laughter] Now I should study every

- Huff: system I could read a book about and be more careful. I don't know what decision I'd come to, because once I left the library, I turned my mind pretty entirely to other matters. Some retired people continue to haunt the library and keep library connections of various kinds and go to lectures on library subjects, but I don't, much as I loved the E.A.L.
- RL: So, then, you basically started, at least, with the Harvard model, adapted for the East Asiatic Library.
- Huff: Yes. It's still being used. I don't think, as late as 1969, that they could very well have changed the classification without splitting the library into before and after, separate stack catalogue and everything.
- I can't remember when Richard Irwin came. He was at Columbia working on his thesis. I think he didn't come until '48, and he started out by cataloguing the Chinese, while Charles Hamilton recatalogued the Japanese.
- RL: And did they collaborate on the E.A.L. draft code for descriptive cataloguing?
- Huff: Yes, long out of print. Never mention it to Charles.
- RL: Why not?
- Huff: Well, as he says, probably quite rightly, he wrote it when he was too young. [Laughter] And Dick wasn't a librarian, hadn't been to library school. I left a copy in the office. Charles had begged me to--he asked me once how many copies were left. People had written in, you know, asking for copies, and there were four or five left. He said, "Please destroy them." [Laughter] I did.
- RL: However, I gather that it was for a time widely used and followed, was it not, by other libraries?
- Huff: I don't know. It started out with a premise, which I still think at that time was perfectly sound, that traditionally in the Far East the main entry was title, and that was enough to send many librarians in this country into a state of shock; it just wasn't done. [Chuckle] But we did it. I have never regretted it.
- RL: But you did authors too, did you not?

Huff: The author was an added entry, instead of vice versa. We also had an authority file .

I think Mr. Chiu had never told me about that, but Charles lost no time in telling me, and we established one. One of our greatest space problems [laughter] after we moved into Durant was that that cabinet was placed opposite the center one of the three cataloguers' offices, in the corridor, and when it became known that this thing existed and some members of the faculty learned what it was for [laughter], instead of going to biographical reference works for birth and death dates or either or floruit dates, as I say, when it came in, they'd go there, the faculty members and some graduate students. And it made traffic in that narrow corridor! [Chuckle] We also put on the cards, of course, the source of our information and usually the tzu and hao, where they were known, of the Chinese authors, the different kinds of pseudonyms. "Tzu" is sometimes translated as "style," and "hao" is sometimes translated as "studio name." Many authors and artists had several of the latter. I ran across the name of an artist the other day who was listed with twenty-seven such names. [Laughter] But that's uncommon.

Once Professor [Yuen Ren] Chao--we had his works, of course, in Chinese, the ones in Chinese, and once I came upon him at the authority file, and I said, "Are you finding what you wish, Professor Chao?" He said, "Yes, but I don't like what I see." He was looking at his own card, of course. [Laughter] I said, "What don't you like?" He said, "That hao, that pseudonym that you've put down for me, I gave up years ago and I don't want it remembered." So, we removed it from the file, from the card, and from the other cards.

RL: But had he published under that pseudonym?

Huff: No. But so often--it's a problem that's much with me now in the translating--an author will refer to a person with his family name followed by his given name, his ming 名, and then refer to him on and on and on, pages and pages, intermittently, using not his surname and not his ming, but one of his pseudonyms. [Chuckle] One thing it does is make indexing very hard, because you have to list all of those and then say, "see..." and refer back to the family name.

I had made the decision, which again I haven't regretted--it's strange, but there are some things I don't regret--of interfiling Chinese and Japanese.

RL: Yes. I was going to ask you why you chose to integrate Chinese, Japanese, and Korean books.

Huff: All those written in character. We had to add some trays when Korean books in hangul started coming in.

Partly because many Japanese books, the older ones, were written in, or purported to be in, Chinese. Partly because many of them were on Chinese subjects. And partly because usually seeing an author and a title, or seeing the author in character, one could know it was Japanese, but not always. And it just seemed to me a single catalogue was better.

I can't think of an example, but I know there were cases where the cataloguers would have been hard put to say into which of the two catalogues the card should go, leading to possible duplication, unnecessary duplication.

Then other cataloguers, of course, were brought in. Besides Charles Hamilton and Richard Irwin, before we moved [to Durant], there was Kiyoko Yamada, who is now the reference librarian in the library, Paul Chen, and Ch'ung-ho Frankel. Charles Hamilton was the teacher and trainer of them. Paul Chen was the only other one among them who had a library degree. He had taken his degree at the University of Illinois.

When we moved, the catalogues were substantial. We had a good start on the subject catalogue, and the union catalogue was imposing. I remember that Edwin [G.] Beal [Jr.], who is now retired as Chief of the Orientalia Division at the Library of Congress, but who's still there as an honorary consultant, I think. I remember once when he visited the library, he asked me how many cards we had in the union catalogue, and we had been asked similar questions about various parts of the catalogue so many times that we'd worked out a system of just measuring the cards in the trays and then multiplying and adding. There were over 80,000 at that point, and he thought that was quite phenomenal.

RL: By 1952, would you say?

Huff: I don't remember the year he came. It was several years before I retired. Probably later than '52.

RL: That's extraordinary.

PLATE 7: Item 22.29, *Hanjungnok*.

22.29 *Hanjungnok* 恨中錄, by Hyegyönggung Hongssi 惠慶宮洪氏
 (1735-1815). N.d. 6 vols. Manuscript.
 Personal anecdotes by Hongssi about her life in the palace and about
 tragic happenings to members of her family. She was the daughter of
 Hong Pong-han 洪鳳漢 (1713-1778) the daughter-in-law of King

Yöngjo, the consort of the heir apparent, Changhön Seja 莊獻世子
 (1735-1762), and the mother of King Chöngjo (1752-1800), Prin-
 cess Ch'öngyön 淸衍公主, and another princess. Yet her life was full
 of tragedies. She was married in 1744 and lived happily with her hus-
 band, the heir apparent, for eighteen years. In the summer of 1762
 her husband was falsely accused of plotting against his father, King
 Yöngjo, and was placed in a sealed box in which he suffocated.

Soon after this tragedy King Yöngjo regretted his harshness, re-
 stored his son's rank posthumously and gave Hongssi the title of Royal
 Consort Hye 惠嬪. She was then twenty-seven years old. The party
 politics that contributed to her husband's death continued to plague
 the Hong family on occasion. In 1776 her son, King Chöngjo, suc-
 ceeded to the throne, and the Hong family enjoyed some protection.
 Her residence in the palace was given the name Hyegyönggung, by
 which she has been identified. After King Chöngjo's death in 1800 a
 change in power politics at court took place when King Yöngjo's
 second wife, Kimssi 金氏 (1745-1805), daughter of Kim Han-gu 金
 漢耆, became the dowager queen reigning during the minority of King
 Sunjo. She favored her own Kim family and suppressed the Hongs.
 During the persecution of Catholic converts, one of Hongssi's brothers,
 Hong Nag-in 洪榮性, was convicted of heresy and sentenced to death.
 This caused much suffering to Hongssi and her family (see also 18.80,
 18.81, 18.82). A part of Hongssi's accounts is about these episodes.

Hongssi probably wrote her narrative in colloquial Korean in *han'gü*.
 It became popular reading, especially for court ladies, and was tran-
 scribed in many copies and under various titles such as *Hanjung cham-
 nok* 恨中雜錄, *Üphyöllök* 泣血錄, and so forth. After 1945, when
 the Koreans, partly due to a resurgence of nationalism, gave emphatic
 preference to all literature written in *han'gü*, Hongssi's *Hanjungnok*
 became celebrated as one of the important classics to be popularized by
 reproductions, annotations, translation, dramatization, and so forth.

There are two old manuscript copies of *Hanjungnok* in the Asami
 collection. The first (22.29), in six fascicles of beautifully and carefully
 written *han'gü*, has the cover title of *Hanjung mallok* 恨中謄錄. It is
 accompanied by two copies of a translation in mixed Chinese and
han'gü, one complete in six fascicles (22.30) and the other only the
 first of a six-fascicle set (22.29a). The second old manuscript copy, in
 one fascicle, with cover title *Pojang* 寶藏 (22.31), is an abridged
 version and is likewise accompanied by a Chinese and *han'gü* trans-
 lation (22.32).

Huff: Filing, and filing by character, is a slow and very sensitive, delicate process.

RL: Can you describe for the lay reader some of the major problems of it?

Huff: One is that not all lexicographers consider a character to be correctly entered under a certain one of the 214 so-called radicals, and you must make a choice; you must decide which is the more nearly accurate. You go back to the earliest big dictionary, of which the preface is dated in a year corresponding to A.D. 100 and take them all the way up.

Another problem, which was especially true in Japan, I think, is abbreviation of characters with many strokes. Now, of course, in the last fifteen years, it's become common in China.

Charles Hamilton saw it as leading to the day when we were going to have to give up our ideals and romanize the catalogue, and I think that's what's been done now, that is, beginning in '70 or whenever. So, I think you do have to consult two catalogues now. Well, as I say, the filing was difficult.

But not long after we moved I had a great stroke of luck. A woman, Viola Larson, who is still the filer there and does other things too, came one day to be interviewed by Maryon Monahan, who was at that time in charge of sub-professional personnel, the hiring and firing thereof, and Maryon gave her the customary interview. She wasn't a librarian, but she'd like to live in Berkeley and she would have to work. Maryon, in asking about her previous experience, learned that she'd been a missionary in China, and Maryon said, "Do you read Chinese?" Viola said, "Yes." Maryon sent her to me and I engaged her promptly. She's a marvelous worker. She's careful enough not to hurry, whatever pressure she might feel upon her, and she has been a gem, as have many of those who are still [there]. There are many still there who have been there for a long time: I may have forgotten to mention Ruthella Pfeiffer, the flawless typist of Western language added entries and subject headings; Suzanne Pon, writer of elegant characters on her cards; Ok-koo Grosjean, faithful bindery assistant and an artist in the writing of hangul.

The last time I saw the union catalogue, it filled the wall space in the second floor corridor from the first office on the east to the last office on the west. [Laughter]

RL: When you say a collection is still uncatalogued, what access do scholars have to it?

Huff: First, being allowed to browse in it, and, secondly, there is a title list with the location symbol to everything uncatalogued. The title, as you know, traditionally in the Orient, was more important than the author--the first entry.

RL: How did you cope with the priorities of processing the past accumulations that you inherited and then the sudden torrent of accessions, primarily, of course, the Mitsui?

Huff: I think we took it chronologically, which is the way I usually like to take things. I think we did the pre-E.A.L. collection first; we recatalogued that first, however working into it new purchases, not block purchases, and we gradually wiped out of arrears everything except five parts of the Mitsui, two having been considered general, and they also were sort of fed into the stream of the old collection.

We sorted duplicates and made several sales of rather large collections of duplicates, of course. Mr. Coney's rule of thumb was: "Buy a large collection only if you know there will be not more than twenty-five percent duplication." I don't think there was that much in the Mitsui. There was none in the Murakami.

I sold some of the duplicates to--no, I couldn't sell them [laughter]--gave some of them to U.C.L.A., which I hadn't been able to sell, and some of them I rather hated to see go. The cases--the t'ao or chitsu--before I came were similar to the Oriental ones, but in buckram, stiff, and I think only one clasp instead of two on the edge. But some of them had lovely title strips that I admired. I admired the writing very much, and years and years later I learned from Fang Chaoying that it was his wife, Tu Lienche, who had written them. I told you I had met her when she was studying at Berkeley, when I was at Mills, and evidently it was in that period when she was working part-time for the department.

RL: I think that perhaps this is a good place to ask how you and Mr. Fang collaborated on the Asami catalogue. It appears under his name and then "edited by Elizabeth Huff."

Huff: Yes. He generously wanted my name to appear on the spine too, and I refused. My editing consisted of checking for inconsistencies amongst the various items, and I found a few, which was quite

- Huff: understandable. Chaoying began to study Korean only before he came to Berkeley, when he knew he was coming. And then my editing after that consisted chiefly and simply of improving, or at least changing, maybe not improving, some of his English expressions. And then I established the format of the pages, which he liked very much, which I was happy to learn.
- RL: It's a beautiful book.
- Huff: I think it's nicely done, yes.
- RL: I think we skipped over the federal grant. What was that for?
- Huff: The only one I remember in my day was to bring Chikao Ogura out here to work with me on the Japanese manuscripts, which I mentioned earlier. That was under an N.D.E.A. grant [National Defense Education Act].

Library of Congress Cooperative Cataloguing Cards: an Attempt to Avoid Duplication of Effort

- RL: Then, as I understand it, there was a system set up by the Library of Congress, initiated by Warren Tsuneishi, in catalogue cards, which you noted in one of your annual reports in 1959 to be a relative failure. You'd sent, as I recall, 133 drafts and received only eleven sets of cards from the Library of Congress.
- Huff: It was an attempt, probably initiated or thought of at the Library of Congress originally, of--I always find these vast economic schemes impractical, and I am usually right--to avoid duplication of effort in this country, cataloguing the same book at several different places.

What happened was we made the draft--I think we probably had to add romanizations on the draft; I'm not certain--and sent it off. Then we filed a p-slip, or two p-slips probably, in the catalogue, pink p-slips so they'd be obvious, and that meant that the finished draft, showing the number of copies that we had requested--we had to know how many copies we wanted--had been sent on a certain date, and we'd wait until the number we'd requested was received.

Huff: And you have the figures. I wouldn't have remembered those [chuckle], but it sounds exactly right. Either we withdrew from the project, or it was stopped; I can't remember which. It was so impractical.

Serials

RL: Is there anything you would like to say about E.A.L.'s collection of journals, the exchange and purchase with other institutions?

Huff: Exchanges between main library and university publications in Japan and China had been going on, I'm sure, from the '20s, and those were continued, and then with E.A.L. being established, increased considerably. And we began quite early to place subscriptions for journals.

I think that at the time I left, or even before, we were receiving well over 2,000 current journals. In the fifties we were given the enviable honor of being made the second United States depository for Japanese government publications. L.C. was first. When the huge parcels arrived, several times a year, we sent all of the material in English to the Main Library. A few of the books and pamphlets were of doubtful usefulness: I remember a thick volume on the technique of reading gas meters.

RL: Tremendous.

Huff: It is quite large, and I think it's probably larger now.

RL: In terms of your exchange commitments, did the library have to pay for the journals that were sent to China or Japan?

Huff: Yes, it did. Yes. Well, now, I don't know whether it came out of the library budget or not. The journals were sent directly from the press. Probably the library did have to pay for those. The only one I remember as being a financial problem [chuckle] was the journal published by the law school. It was an expensive journal and I think a special arrangement was made that E.A.L. itself, as I recall, had to pay for that.

RL: What about California state publications?

Huff: We had to pay for those. We sent some of them, I know, in exchange with the National Diet Library in Tokyo.

Huff: After due time, we again were able to establish an exchange with the National Peking Library, the National Library of Peking. (I get the university and the library confused in my mind about the way they phrased their names.) That worked in a somewhat different way. We exchanged lists of publications available, and then each returned his list with the items marked that he wanted, and each item had an approximate dollar value attached. Sometimes from Peking we would receive a request for a government publication that was proscribed in those days, one that Mrs. [Dorothy B.] Keller, head of acquisitions, said that we would not be able to send. I think "sensitive" was the word she used. [Laughter]

RL: Can you remember what sorts of publications those were?

Huff: Directly or indirectly related to military matters.

RL: It seems curious, since if they were unclassified government publications presumably anybody could buy them and take them to Hong Kong.

Huff: I suppose so, yes.

Reference Services: Sir George Sansom and Other Users

The tripod's legs seemed firm: the collecting practice to encompass a catholic reference library, but without contempt or despondency toward any research modes of the day; the processing of books by a scheme not cumbersome but admitting of precise control and of access by subject in English, by Chinese or Japanese author and title: the reading room service in reference and lending.

E.A.L. Annual Report, 1956-1957

RL: Can you describe to me how your reference department grew and how you managed that?

Huff: At the very beginning, when Room 415 [Doe Library] was our first reading room, Yoshimi Nakamura, who has remained on the staff until this day, was put there, and her duties were simply maintenance of the small reference collection we could shelve in there, and circulation.

Huff: After we had moved into Durant, we had become known somewhat, and we began to receive calls from businesses, from collectors. Some people came in with their questions, some people phoned, some people wrote. And I had to work out a system of reference which would be as good as possible within the abilities of the whole staff.

So, the reference librarian had a series of choices. If he or she could not answer the question, and often that person could, then, depending upon the nature of the question, the reference librarian would appeal to the Chinese bibliographer, the Korean bibliographer, the Japanese bibliographer. If that second person could not find the answer, he appealed to either Charles or me, whichever happened to be free, and sometimes if Charles needed help we would work together on it, or if I couldn't answer it, I would ask Charles. [Laughter]

We were usually successful, though some paintings, for example, were brought in with either the signatures or colophons written in a hand so cursive that nobody, including the Chinese or Japanese cataloguers, could decipher them.

RL: Why were paintings brought to you rather than to the de Young [Museum]?

Huff: Well, they were brought not for appraisal, but for identification of the artist, and I daresay we were the best place to bring them.

RL: Yes.

Huff: I remember that for a period there in the '50s many Japanese swords were brought in for identification of the sword maker, swordsmith.

RL: Was there a sudden vogue in the collecting of swords?

Huff: They were war trophies. The Japanese swords were always signed, and the craft or art often went down from generation to generation in the same family, and many could be identified. But I remember once spending all the spare time I had in three days trying to identify a Chinese name, which I think I did, and I remember that when James Cahill came out here--I had known him when he was a student, but when he came out to teach, he had talked to me about the problem--he was coming, you know, from the Freer Gallery--of identifying signatures and seals on Chinese paintings. He said, "Do you spend much time on it?" And I said, "Well, if we are

Huff: unsuccessful after many hours or many days, we give it up." He said, "Good heavens! We had a rule at the Freer that if we couldn't identify the signature or seal within thirty minutes, we'd simply tell the owner that we couldn't, but it made no difference because it was a beautiful painting."

RL: You told me that Gump's had also come to you.

Huff: Gump's, yes. There was a Mrs. Hough there who used to come-- same pronunciation!

I had a policy somewhat broader, I think, than most of the other Oriental libraries of buying English and French reference works also. We have quite a lot.

Then, of course, we were always receiving them in gifts. And sometimes when the book wasn't really a reference book it was too tempting not to keep it. [Laughter]

RL: What percentage of the holdings of East Asiatic Library was not in Oriental languages?

Huff: Oh, less than one percent, perhaps half of one percent.

RL: I had, evidently, the erroneous impression that under your mandate, which I'm sure is as visible as the English constitution [chuckle], that you gave books in European languages or non-Oriental languages to the main library.

Huff: Most of them we did, most of those that came in in gifts. Of course, those I ordered were for the reading room chiefly.

RL: Yes. What was so tempting about the ones you kept?

Huff: That they had become rare or scarce or were extremely expensive. Prip-Møller's two volumes on Buddhist architecture.

RL: I see. That type. But you would not keep any current books in Western languages on the Orient unless they had something very special about them.

Huff: Yes. I had to buy, for example, all of Joseph Needham's books-- Science and Civilisation in China. I bought a copy for myself too, ordered it before I retired. I would have had a hard time paying the bill after that. There are three copies of that in the library system. I did keep the E.A.L. copy in the reading room because it's

Huff: a better reference work for historical science and other historical subjects in China than any encyclopedia that's been issued in any language. But we'd get things like ordinary editions of [Arthur] Waley, or Henry Hart's Translations from Chinese Poetry, or an English translation of a Japanese novel. Things like that I would simply give to the main library.

For several years in the early '60s, one of our regular patrons was Sir George Sansom, after he had retired and moved to Stanford, and he used to come up. He would call and ask me to reserve a room with a cross draft and a view of the bay in the Durant [Hotel] for one or two nights, and then he'd spend the days in E.A.L. It wasn't entirely reference because, of course, he knew a great deal about the books he wanted to consult that happened not to be at Stanford. But we did help him some with finding obscure titles--I imagine Charles helped him quite a lot. And he was a delightful person to have around. You knew him?

RL: Knew him and loved him.

Huff: Yes.

RL: Do you know how he got into Japanese studies?

Huff: He was sent as a young man to the British Embassy in Tokyo. Now, I don't know details at all. This is my understanding. I remember having a long conversation with him once about the old beautiful capital of the Silla kingdom in Korea, Kyōngju. I don't know how long he was there, but he told of it and its architectural and archaeological wonders in a delightful way.

I think it was when he was in Tokyo in the embassy that he published his translation of the Tsurezure-gusa, which for years was the only one. Now Donald Keene has published another. I don't know how long Sir George lived in Tokyo.

At some point, maybe toward the beginning of the war, he was in Singapore, and I think it was for his notable activities there that he was knighted.

Later he was in Washington. Wasn't it toward the end of the war, or soon after?

RL: I think so.

Huff: He worked, I know, in the Library of Congress a great deal. He said it was a beastly thing because in the room where he was given to work, smoking wasn't allowed, and he was a heavy smoker. [Laughter] Quite often, he'd have to go down to some other room where he could smoke. He didn't smoke when I knew him because he had already developed emphysema.

RL: And then I know that for many years his short history of Japan was the only work available in English.

Huff: Japan: A Short Cultural History.

RL: Thank you. It was a remarkable achievement that you must have helped him with that he managed in retirement to write his three-volume history.

Huff: Yes. Well, I don't know how much I--I don't think I helped him, but the second volume did appear after he'd been using our library for some time, and the third one appeared perhaps after his death in early 1965.

The first two volumes of that set are very, very good, and I surprisingly have occasion to consult them quite often. The third volume shows that he was becoming frail.

When he came up to Berkeley for his day or two or sometimes three, he always insisted upon taking me to lunch, usually at the Durant Hotel, and he always bought a bottle of Krug wine, which he insisted upon our having before lunch. [Chuckle]

RL: Before?

Huff: Yes. [Laughter] And I always said, "But it will make me sleepy." He said, "It doesn't matter." So, well, you know, I had great respect for Sir George and I wouldn't have thought of declining, even if I knew that I would go to sleep at my desk, which I don't think I ever did. But on those days when I'd come back after lunch with him and have occasion to speak to Richard Irwin about something, he would look at me in the most severe manner and say, "Do I smell liquor?" [Laughter]

Several times Sir George and Lady Sansom invited Maryon [Monahan] and me down to their quite beautiful house in Stanford. You've been there?

RL: Yes.

Huff: It's a lovely house.

RL: And what I remember with such joy was his collection of Korean ceramics.

Huff: Oh, magnificent!

One day I mentioned to Sir George at lunch that we had had a most unpleasant experience. We had some wild bird feeders around the house and lots of birds came. But one day a bird knocked itself out against the window and dropped to the ground, and we supposed he had died. Sir George said, "Oh no! Don't you know what to do? Katharine and I often have lunch on our patio. There's a large picture window there, and birds quite often fly against it and fall dazed to the ground. So, Katharine simply picks up the bird and puts a drop of brandy [chuckle] into its mouth, and in a minute it flies away happy as ever." [Laughter]

RL: Isn't that marvelous.

Huff: Isn't it! I'd never have thought of such a thing.

RL: Have you tried it?

Huff: No, because we haven't had the experience since.

RL: Well, perhaps Sir George was one of your most distinguished users. Were there other things that you wanted to say about reference?

I'll always remember a story you told me last time about Vietnam.

Huff: Oh, was that on the blank tape? [Chuckle]

RL: I'm afraid so.

Huff: Do you think that's worth including?

RL: Oh, yes.

Huff: Well, as I've said, I always spent the hour from three to four in the afternoon at the public desk, answering the phone and charging out books and so on. The phone rang one day, and a rather glib young feminine voice said, "Do you know anything about Vietnam?" I said, "Something, not a great deal." [She said] "Well, what

Huff: French word does 'Vietnam' come from?" I said, "It doesn't come from a French word. It comes from the Annamese, ultimately the Chinese." And she said, "But I suppose you know that Vietnam was a French colony." I said, "I know that, from the mid-19th century up till the end of the war." [She said,] "Well, then, 'Vietnam' has to come from French." [Laughter] And then she said, "I want you to know that I majored in French at California."

RL: Wow!

Huff: I said, "Didn't the French call it 'L'Indochine'?" "Oh," she said, "Good-bye." [Laughter]

RL: What were the main sorts of questions you received from the business community?

Huff: Oh, often it was: "Do you have a file of such-and-such scientific journal?" That was from places like the oil companies. Occasionally, I think there were questions about reference works on jade, which would have been the jewelry companies, I suppose.

I remember that we had more than once, and I cannot at all remember from whom, questions about Japanese publications, and there are some very substantial ones on earthquakes.

We had questions from industrial laboratories, importers, and book dealers among others.

At one time, I devised a form that was photocopied to be used at the desk for notations to be made of the questions, reference questions, that came in. I thought it would be interesting to see the range of them and so on. The staff would never go along with it. [Laughter] They said it was a great bore and they hadn't time. And I can't recall much now.

We had more than several calls over the years from people wanting Siamese names for their Siamese cats. [Laughter]

RL: Did you supply them?

Huff: No. We had no one on the staff who knew Siamese. We always had to refer them to Professor Mary Haas.

RL: Extensions of the concept of service.

Huff: Yes.

RL: And would you say that there was anything much in terms of reference calls from the scientific community?

Huff: Locally?

RL: Yes.

Huff: Quite a lot from the Radiation Lab. A woman there, a very pleasant woman whose name I don't know, used to come down quite often to consult certain Japanese journals, those that had English summaries, I think.

I mentioned Professor Proskauer.

RL: Earlier.

Huff: A long time ago, yes.

Mrs. Georgianne Titus was then head of the Engineering Library. She used to call often. She was one of those extremely accommodating persons who would save the faculty member the trouble and find the information for him.

There was a scientist, Herbert Evans, famous for his identification of vitamins. But he didn't call about vitamins; he called about Japanese prints. [Laughter]

Percy, don't chase Chin-po. [To cat and dog] He's smaller than you are.

Early on I bought a bound book of blank pages and asked visitors to write their names in it. When I retired, it held many distinguished signatures including those of Prince and Princess Mikasa; the prince is the Emperor of Japan's brother. Other people I remember were-- Herbert Franke, David Hawkes, Liu Wu-chi, Yoshikawa Kōjirō, Bernard Leach, and Yanagi Sōetsu.

Rare Books

Huff: Mr. Coney at first told me that in his opinion a public university library should have nothing to do with a rare book collection, and I thought of Houghton at Harvard, and all those lovely things, and the Yale collection. But I said, "All right."

Well, then, with the block acquisition of the Mitsui Library, we couldn't help being owners of quite a lot of rarities, and I think after we had moved [to Durant] and I had arranged the rare book room, that Mr. Coney liked it. And after that we added things from time to time--not many.

RL: What was Mr. Coney's reasoning?

Huff: He said that he thought a university library was for students and faculty, that the books were for them to borrow and take home and read, and I said that I'm sure that some of the faculty research in Berkeley has been based upon rare books. I think the Biology Library has quite a good rare book collection.

RL: Who was responsible for the rare books?

Huff: I. No, as for processing, they went through the usual system, but I did the shelving. When a book came up, titled, finished, ready for shelving, that had a long red flag in it--you've probably seen them--at the top it said "Rush"--it was brought to my office, and then I, when I had time, took it down and shelved it. I liked to be familiar with those books, because most visitors coming through, unless they were coming to use the collection, wanted to see the rare books.

Over the years the library received a remarkable number of donations. When I retired, I left a long file of reports of gifts, but I would like to note a few that stand out in my memory.

The Japanese Imperial Household Agency sent us copies of the lavish books on marine biology that bear on the title pages the name of the Emperor of Japan as first author.

Mrs. Anson S. Blake gave and bequeathed both books and scrolls. William B. Pettus, of Berkeley, gave us interesting small objects. George H. Kerr, who's now living in Hawaii, gave us a handsome, hand-painted, facsimile map, on silk, of Formosa as the Japanese found it--about three feet high by eight feet wide.

Huff: Professor Y.R. Chao gave us the corrected typescript of one of his important books, and Elizabeth Bayley Willis gave us some unusually fine kokeshi.

RL: What are kokeshi?

Huff: It used to be that when a Japanese family lost a child, a carved and painted doll would be made--painted in an almost geometric fashion. They are very beautiful. Little memorial dolls, between six and eight inches high.

Various Binding Solutions

Regard has been accorded the Library's minor renown as one of the best attired of Oriental collections.

E.A.L. Annual Report, 1958

RL: I have heard that the E.A.L. was the best dressed library in its field. How did you accomplish this?

Huff: It was, the last time I saw it, certainly. Well, I talked with the head of binding in the main library, saw samples of the different sorts of things possible, and decided that I'd have as few quarter binds as possible. Do you know what a quarter bind is?

RL: No.

Huff: Stiff boards with a strip of blue buckram down the spine.

RL: Now I know, yes.

Huff: Only the very least important texts or those least likely to be in demand were given quarter binds. Buckram and cloth: cloth is prettiest. We put in buckram heavy books. For example, bound volumes of most journals were put in buckram.

The greatest problem we had to face was the Chinese cases. We found a chitsu maker in Tokyo, and we worked out a system of measurements in the metric system. We were able to send him a pack, perhaps as many as fifty at a time, slips with the title of a book and the inside measurements. We almost never had a misfit. It was remarkable.

RL: Remarkable.

Huff: And we could choose different colors, as we chose cinnamon for the Asami, but largely they were navy.

Then I don't know how it came about that someone suggested that we should have those cases made in this country, which was impossible, and it was suggested to me that prisoners could make them. So, a--I don't know what his title was--an officer, anyway, of a nearby prison, where the prisoners did make various things, came to call on me one afternoon. I explained the whole thing to him and showed him examples. "Oh, sure," he said. And I said, "Now, what about the title and characters." He said, "That's easy. We have a lot of forgers in there." [Laughter] I said, "What? Forgers of Chinese and Japanese names?" He said, "No. Don't you know how forgers work?" I said, "No," never having been one. [Chuckle] He said, "Upside down. It comes out almost perfectly, whereas if they write normally their own hand inevitably expresses itself."

So, I think I gave him a discarded t'ao to take back with him, and word came, not many days later, [chuckle] that, "Sorry. No go." So, we went back to our Japanese supplier.

RL: That was a good idea. A pity it didn't work. [Laughter]

The Quarterly 'Newly Catalogued Books in the East Asiatic Library'

RL: In 1957, I noted that you started distributing a quarterly of newly catalogued books in the East Asiatic Library. Can you discuss that and how it was received? I believe it was an enormous success, but you shrug and look miserable. [Laughter] Why is that?

Huff: Because it took so much time.

I think that I wrote a memo, which I sent to all of the faculty members on the campus whom I knew used our library, even if only occasionally, and asked whether or not any person wished to receive such a publication. I think they all said yes [chuckle], and I believe that the edition we ran off was thirty. It's probably gone up by now if they're still producing it. In time some requests came in from out of town, and I think that I acceded to those.

Huff: I cannot remember how we got the face of the cards onto the master sheet. They were reduced, of course, and printed on 8 1/2 X 11 paper. When they came back to us from the Photo Lab, I suppose, they came as they had been printed, all pages 1 and 2 on the top of the stack, then all pages 3 and 4, and on that occasion, regardless of whatever use that either of the big tables in the reading room might be being put to, we had to clear both, and then Viola Larson collated the sheets and stapled them. Then they were put in envelopes, in brown paper envelopes, and sent through the campus mail.

The cards were arranged, of course, in call number order, and at the beginning of each class the name was typed so that it would be easy to flip through and find whatever you wanted.

RL: I know it was regarded as an enormous service.

Huff: I think that was new. I don't remember having heard of it in other Far Eastern libraries.

G.K. Hall Publishes the E.A. L. Catalogue

RL: Can you tell me how it came about that G.K. Hall Publishing Company decided to reproduce in nineteen volumes the author-title and subject catalogues of the E.A.L.?

Huff: It was the first Far Eastern one that he did. He was already well established, of course, in this kind of publishing. It was his invention. But he had never done one of the Far Eastern catalogues. I was quite disappointed when I was told by Mr. Coney to go ahead with it.

RL: Why?

Huff: Think of what it did to the inter-library loan department and its head, Margaret Uridge--requests from Europe, from everywhere. How it came about was Mr. Coney's suggestion to G.K. Hall himself. I think that the main library had been done, hadn't it? Its catalogue had been published, I believe.

RL: I don't know.

Huff: And Mr. Coney made the suggestion to G.K. Hall and then told me, and I said, "Let's not go ahead with it." Well, Mr. Coney had perhaps or almost certainly a better--that is to say, a more generally informed and more objective--view of the library than I had. I said, "It's not quite big enough yet," and, well, it was, as it turned out. [Laughter] I always look at that small building, Durant Hall, and think it can't hold many books. [Chuckle] So, mei yu fa-tzu, as the Chinese say, "There was nothing to do."

Mr. Hall or his secretary in Boston started placing long distance calls to me, of which there were many. He was an extremely wealthy man at a fairly early age. We agreed upon a date on which he would send one of his photographers and equipment out to set up the camera in the reading room, which really hadn't room for it, and to start with tray one and just keep going. The rapidity with which they photographed those cards is something I have never seen the like of! They just went and zipped right through.

Well, they sent out a young man named Bongiorno, from Lexington, Mass.

RL: What a beautiful name!

Huff: He always came in and said, "Buon giorno," good day. He hadn't been in Berkeley before, and he quite literally lost his mind. He adored it. It was heaven. Telegraph Avenue! He had never seen anything so great. And this was in the wildest period, wasn't it? [1967-1968]

Well, he set up his camera, photographed a tray, I think, examined the film, came in to me and said, "I won't be back for two or three days. I have to send this to Boston and have word from there that it's satisfactory and that I'm to continue." And indeed I didn't see him for two or three days. Then he came one morning very late and said he'd overslept, sorry, but the film was okay and he could continue. So, he worked till lunch time, was gone a couple of hours, came back, and worked a little bit. The next day he didn't show up.

So, I called Boston and said, "I don't think this will do. It's a great nuisance in the reading room, and I'm very happy to accommodate you, but not with a photographer who works only a few hours a week. Meanwhile, we're all crawling around the equipment." And the secretary--I suppose she was a secretary--said she would talk to Mr. Hall, and when Mr. Bongiorno turned up the next time to

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The foundations of the East Asiatic Library were laid in the late nineteenth century with the deposit of John Fryer's Chinese Collection and were strengthened in 1916 by the gift of the Kiang Kang-Hu library. From that time until 1947, when the Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and other Far Eastern materials were established as a separate unit, the scope of the collecting policy was broadened to extend beyond the humanities. The Library has become a large, general one. Subjects range from language and literature to the natural sciences and technology, albeit the first, along with history in all its forms, philosophy, the arts, and the modern social sciences, is representative of the most voluminous classes.

The earliest examples of printing are from the eighth and tenth centuries. The Japanese holdings, almost as large as the Chinese, are unusual in number of Edo (1600 to 1867) imprints and the Murakami Library of Meiji literature. There are substantial monographs and periodicals from Communist China. Both North and South Korea furnish titles to follow after the array of Yi dynasty imprints and manuscripts and the succeeding publications of the period of Japanese occupation.

The catalogs that reveal the collection show sixteen years of painstaking care on the part of Charles E. Hamilton, Chief Cataloger, and his staff. Their frequently laborious research has produced a display that is outstanding in its high degree of accurate description. The single author-title catalog is arranged in the order of characters in the index to *Matheu's Chinese-English Dictionary*, after which much shorter sections show entries beginning with, respectively, *kana*, *han'gul*, and the Roman alphabet. The subject catalog, an alphabetical file, bears English headings based upon the Library of Congress list.

The estimated 315,000 cards in these catalogs will be reproduced by offset on Permalife paper with 21 cards per 10" x 14" page. The 13 volumes of the Author-Title Catalog and the 6 volumes of the Subject Catalog are bound in Class A library binding.

<p>8624.6 2224</p> <p>絹川健吉 Kinokawa, Kenkichi. 臺灣金石嶺山岳図帖 絹川健吉編 長政 術 小虎須野 大正3.19山. 2 p.39 plates. 19x27cm.</p> <p>1. Mines and mineral resources--Formosa-- Chin-hua-shih. I. Title. 29963</p> <p>CU-E Q1-3385</p>	<p>2737 2323 1804</p> <p>Wu, Wei-yeh, 1609-1672. 3卷 臺灣草史 鄭鴻猷 打來海編 增訂 n.p. 照臨閣 基隆中3(1904) 註. Ev. (double leaves) in case. 30cm.</p> <p>1. China--Hist.--Ch'ung-ch'ên, 1628-1644-- Sources. I. Title. 東15711-6</p> <p>CU-E 60-2452</p>	<p>4784 4631</p> <p>Hand, Tatsujî, 1903- 内政的考察 現代政治的批判 花房健二著 日本政 策研究所編 東京 新文館 昭和10(1935). 153 p. 29cm.</p> <p>1. Political parties--Japan. 2. World politics--1915-- --Addresses, essays, lectures. I. Title. II. Title: Gendai seitô hibun. 東183463</p> <p>CU-E Q1-1623</p>
<p>4443 2241</p> <p>絹川文一 本邦綿織紡績史 絹川文一 昭和十至十七年(1937-1942) 大阪 日本綿業俱樂部 六冊</p> <p>東104170-5</p> <p>CU-E 53-4382</p>	<p>2337 2323 1937</p> <p>經史紀略 卷之五 補遺 15 吳傳業主編 上海 商務印書館 據學津 民國二十六年(1937) 長沙 商務印書館 據學津 討原本印 一冊(原三冊)(蓋卷集成初編)</p> <p>東24459</p> <p>CU-E 56-1250</p>	<p>4784 5446</p> <p>Nakamura, Kikuo, 1919- 戰後日本政黨史 中村有房著 東京 社會思 想社 昭和36.1961. 4,128 p. 19cm.</p> <p>1. Political parties--Japan. 2. Japan--Pol. & gov't.--1945- I. Title. 199416</p> <p>CU-E 65-1641</p>
<p>絹業試驗所集報 見 纖維工業試驗所研究報告</p> <p>東104170-5</p> <p>CU-E 53-4382</p>	<p>2224 6035 2936</p> <p>Kao, Kung, 1512-1578. 上海 商務 印書館 高第街 上海 商務 民國二十六年(1937) 長沙 商務印書館 據學津 討原本印 一冊(原三冊)(蓋卷集成初編)</p> <p>東24459</p> <p>CU-E 56-1250</p>	<p>4984.1 1928</p> <p>政黨年鑑 朝日新聞政黨記者團著 創刊1947 東京 ニュース社</p> <p>東15711-6</p> <p>CU-E 60-2452</p>

(Author-Title Catalog)

(Subject Catalog)

These cards were selected at random to show format only.

Huff: hold him in my office and put in a call, which I did, and I told him why. I said, "I have complained that you're really causing us more nuisance than is quite necessary."

So, I called and talked to a very nice man--I met him later--who was an assistant of Hall, and he said, "Have you spoken to him?" I said, "Yes. More than once I have spoken to him. But he'll come in waving a copy of the Daily Cal which has a picture of a nude man on the cover, beside himself with joy. I honestly don't think he's working very hard for you." The man said, "Well, all right. Put him on. I'll fire him." So, he did. That was unpleasant.

RL: Yes, I'm sure.

Huff: But he said, "I can see your point, and I'll get another job in Berkeley." I never saw him again.

So, not a very long time passed when a new photographer appeared, a Filipino boy, who was the sweetest fellow, and quietest, and most efficient. He saw at once that even though it would keep the trays away from the catalogue a longer time if the camera were in a different room, that it was a nuisance to us and it wasn't very convenient for him. So, we set the camera up in the rare book room, and he'd run up the steps three at a time, replace one tray, take another one down, and he finished the job quite speedily. There has since been a supplement a year or two ago. Another volume came out, which I haven't seen.

RL: How was it received by the public? The library public, I assume.

Huff: Well, everybody bought a copy that I ever heard of. [Chuckle] And Hall sold copies in the Orient, and, of course, in England and Europe. It's not the sort of thing that would elicit a book review, I think. [Laughter] I never saw one.

I should say one thing: G.K. Hall had asked me if I thought that he should offer the author-title catalogue and the subject catalogue separately, that some places might want to buy only the subject, because of the English headings. I thought about it and decided yes.

Well, when I saw him in Boston next time I went out, he said they had sold some separate copies of the two parts.

Faculty Influence on Acquisitions: Was the Librarian Biased?

If faculty participation in book selection proved to be disappointing, as it did prove to be, the librarians had disinterestedly increased a collection planned to be general.

EAL Report First Fifteen Years, 1962

RL: A difficult question that turned up in your annual reports and also in some of the library materials is who decides what books a library should buy? In your annual reports from 1949 to 1952, you noted that the faculty input, booklists and requests, become more numerous every year. Robert Downs* says that "librarians should have the responsibility for building collections, and their assuming this will make for a stronger profession." He doesn't say "stronger library." Could you give me your thoughts on these difficult questions?

Huff: My thoughts have always been that, to a certain extent, the buying from year to year must reflect the current strengths and interests of the faculty, which do change. I'm sure that when Professor [Henry] Rosovsky went to Harvard the interest in historical Japanese economics dwindled. I should expect it would have. And we put quite a lot into that because he used the collection, and the books weren't all easy to get. Many of them were out of print. So, in a university library, I don't think you can establish a policy and expect it to hold fifty years hence.

I've also thought that a librarian should seek advice, specific titles or authors, from the persons on the faculty who know their particular fields better than any librarian possibly could. I can't conceive of a university librarian who would not have available to him the benefit of the special knowledge of at least some of the faculty, and I think he should take advantage of it.

Now, Mr. Downs may have extra faculty resources that I don't know about! [Chuckle] He decided, among others, to establish a Far Eastern Library, and he asked me to look at it, I think, when my father was ill, in '61.

*In Guy R. Lyle, ed., The Librarian Speaking, University of Georgia Press, Athens, 1970.

RL: Where was this?

Huff: Urbana. The way he had gone about it was simply to write to Charles Tuttle and name fields and, I suppose, probably a budget limit. I don't know. When I was there, Mr. Downs had cleared a section of the main library stack. I guess that's the way we all started out. [Chuckle] And I went through it. It didn't take very long. It was, it seemed to me, without unity or synthesis. It was spotty, in my opinion. The one notable acquisition, that I think Charles Tuttle had been able to find for him, and it was quite remarkable that he did, was the much mentioned Ssu-pu ts'ung k'au series, and he had that. He had, I think, on the whole, more Japanese than Chinese, though that may have changed, of course, since then, books that Tuttle could easily supply, and some of them handsome books, on art and so on. Now that George Yü, one of our doctors in political science, is a professor at Illinois, the character of the Chinese collection has no doubt changed. He took there as his librarian Ernst Wolff, who had just completed his Ph.D. up at Seattle and who read both Chinese and Japanese well.

RL: I recollect that in the early '50s there was a faculty objection to E.A.L. acquisitions saying that the librarian imposed her own tastes for the antique and for literature and was neglecting the modern and the social sciences. Could you comment on that?

Huff: Yes. I had all along tried to be fair in doing as much as I could, usually through the bibliographers, the specialists, to buy for all of the faculty who expressed interest, who used the collections, or whose research assistants did. I had--I still have--very little knowledge of the social sciences in the Orient or any other place. I was not uninterested. I could hardly conceal the fact that my own tastes and, therefore, my own best knowledge were in other fields.

I was not prepared for such a blast as I quite suddenly received. I shouldn't say it was unexpected--well, it was totally unexpected, really. Mr. Coney always appointed representatives of various interests to the Carpentier committee to decide how the Carpentier funds should be spent that year. The representative for social sciences, perhaps the only one of the six, I'm not certain, was Professor Bob [Robert] Scalapino, with whom I thought I had always got on. I had certainly bought things for him of which I had

Huff: very much doubt of the usefulness--much microfilm, which was expensive, and of newspapers that were available at Hoover, and things like that.

At that Carpentier meeting, he had been quite uncontrollably unpleasant, accusing me and my bibliographers of buying for the Oriental Languages Department, several of whose members were sitting there, and not for the other faculties. I was quite shaken by his behavior, and it was unusual. It was the only time I ever saw him almost irrational. I asked him for examples.

Then, sometime later, Mr. Coney sent me a memo that was written not to me but to him, which I thought was rather poor business, since I knew the signers better than he did. It was three or three-and-a-half pages single-spaced, and I can recall nothing that it said, except that the point of the whole thing was that Mary Wright [Hoover Institute, Stanford] was a good librarian and I wasn't, because Mary Wright bought for the social sciences and in the modern fields. I thought the letter was extremely indiscreet.

So, I spent the weekend in the library all alone, going over book purchases in Chinese and Japanese. Korean wasn't involved in this. I think it was before Professor Scalapino's Korean stage. I was going over the acquisitions, title by title, and making a chart of the fields. I included history in the social sciences, and I specified that, social sciences including history, because, of course, Delmer Brown was in history. I found that of the acquisitions, quite plainly--and I didn't want to come out even this much in their favor as it did--it came out about fifty percent for the social sciences. And that, while it didn't necessarily mean fifty percent of the funds, it probably was close to it. Of course, we were also buying in technical fields and the natural sciences. So books on art and literature, which were really my field, probably represented about a quarter or a third of the acquisitions in terms of both cost and quantity.

And that's all I remember. It's one of those things I've tried to suppress. [Laughter] I don't remember it well! Perhaps,

Huff: I shouldn't have been so blunt in the annual report.* That was it.

RL: When you say you didn't want it to come out like that, what do you mean?

Huff: I thought it was an imbalance; just considering the readers in the library, both student and faculty. But it so often happened that something quite exceptional and important in one of those fields would come out--a projected series of really important documents or something like that--that even I would have ordered it, and so you'd take away a little from some less important literary series that was offered.

Questions of Security: The Watchdog at the Gate

RL: As I went back to the library to read the annual reports, I was especially struck by the beauty of it, and I think your catalogue cards are in wooden cases, which lend warmth.

Huff: Yes.

RL: Perhaps you could also tell me about how you tried to control the problem of theft, which I understand is a major consideration.

*From E.A.L. Annual Report, 1956-1957. "Six teachers in History, Political Science, Business Administration, and Anthropology declared in a letter to the Carpentier-E.A.L. Fund Subcommittee that book selection in the E.A.L. was indeed neglectful of 'scholarly works' in the Chinese and Japanese social sciences fields and this by reason of the personal interests of the Librarian and (presumably) her influence upon the bibliographers in charge of ordering. The responsibility was theirs to select the 'bulk' of new acquisitions; and the social sciences, undefined, should be accorded consideration that would effect a collection similar to the one at Hoover Library. The motive remains dark behind the letter, and its abrupt unpleasantness can be only partly dissolved by an analysis of new titles that showed half of them to be in the subjects in question, by the recollection of the equal claims of a greater number of readers who have not expressed dissatisfaction, and by the abatement of the thrust which is implicit in criticism wordy without pointed examples or precise detail."

Huff: When we could afford the time, we took inventory. That's a very sacred thing in many libraries. I could never afford to do it annually. The process is simple; you check the shelflist against the shelves and finally the records of the books that have been loaned.

But after we moved, I spent the hour from three o'clock until four every day at the reading room desk answering the telephone, seeing who came in and went out, seeing how people were using the books. I remember once having--and I did it without offense, I'm sure--having to show a young Chinese girl how properly to turn the pages of a book. She was sort of scuffing the pages, you know, as they sometimes do. And if I didn't recognize a person who came down from the stack and wanted to charge out a book, I asked for identification, and if it was an undergraduate, I asked him how in the world he got in. That was one of the things at the desk; the faculty members were recognized very soon after they began using the library, of course, and the graduate students, if they were new, produced their cards to show that they were graduate students.

And also one day a barefoot young man came in smoking marijuana, and I had to tell him that that wasn't done in the reading room.
[Laughter]

Then, at some time during the day, almost always, I walked through the Durant Hall stack. Once I found a young man eating a ham sandwich, and I asked him to put it away or to leave.

When we moved, in the general sort of rearrangement of the staff, Richard Irwin was made Chinese bibliographer, half-time, and, well, he did also man the desk an hour, and he later was given the title reference librarian, though he continued to choose most of the Chinese titles.

With the others who were at the desk, I simply persuaded them as well as I could that everyone wants to be loved, but a library reading room is no place in which to put that desire above the good of the library. Be polite, but be firm. And for some Oriental people, that's difficult, which I can well understand, but it never was for me.

RL: It wasn't for you?

Huff: It wasn't. I suffer from an ineradicable, in some respects, Puritan upbringing [laughter], and I think if you are charged with the care and development of a collection of books, or a collection of anything, that you're obliged to do the best that you yourself can to protect it.

RL: And Charles Hamilton's position?

Huff: Chief of the catalogue division, remains the same.*

RL: And did he also man the desk?

Huff: Never. It would have frightened him.

RL: I have always been struck by the idea that the head of a library as prestigious and important would sit and do what in the general library is predominantly done by general assistance staff.

Huff: As I become more objective about it as I grow older, the library was, to a considerable extent, expressive of my own doubtful personality, and I think it was because I was fairly firm with the staff--they didn't misbehave [laughter]--also because I thought it was good that I know as many of the patrons as I could, and I think it rather pleased them that I wasn't above doing what a student might be doing.

RL: What do you mean by your "own doubtful personality"?

Huff: [Laughter] Well, I suppose what I mean is "not always consistent."

Monthly Staff Meetings in the Rare Book Room

RL: We have touched on staffing. Perhaps this is a good place to ask about your philosophy as far as staffing and running of the library. I heard, for example, that you had monthly staff meetings.

Huff: Yes.

RL: What was the primary purpose of those, and how did you run them?

Huff: We met at one of the large tables in the rare book room. That was partly because it was a treat for many of the staff--who rarely

*Now a member of the Original Cataloguing Section, Monographic Division, of the Catalogue Department of the Main Library.

Huff: went into the rare book room. I had always an agenda. There was never want of something to talk about. I thought it was a good morale factor to keep as many of the staff as I could informed of anything of interest--a distinguished visitor and what he had said, the preview of the budget. Mr. Coney always told us, the heads, I think, sometime in June, what it would probably be. If a new person had been appointed and hadn't yet started, I'd speak of that. When anyone was in the Far East, I'd tell the staff whatever he had written me. There seemed always to be somebody in the Far East. [Laughter] Such things. Well, and then the question of any change that might be made in policy.

In some libraries, the cataloguers keep records of the number of titles that they describe in their drafts. I don't know whether weekly, monthly; it probably varies. I had never asked that. It seemed to me to suggest competition that might lead to ill feeling. But Mr. [Marion] Milczewski, who was then associate librarian, I think, had told me that some cataloguers relished it, and that in his opinion it didn't create contention.

So, I suggested that at a staff meeting, and as I remember it, all of the cataloguers except one either liked the thought or were perfectly willing, and the one who didn't was almost violently opposed to it. [Chuckle] I don't know why. I never shall know why, because she was by far the fastest cataloguer we ever had and the most--I'm trying to think of a nice word--excitable. And, of course, as such things usually happen, she decided she'd rather be doing Western books and went off to New York Public after two years. [Laughter] I'd brought her from Harvard. She'd been one of Mr. Chiu's cataloguers who hadn't been happy there, I gather.

Eiji Yutani, the Japanese bibliographer, also came to me from Mr. Chiu, who had told me he was unhappy.

RL: How would you describe your administration? Thinking back to my sociology days, I pulled out a few categories: hierarchical, democratic, collegial?

Huff: Oh, yes. I saw that on the agenda. I think I made a note. Are we on the same page?

RL: What did you write?

Huff: "Autocratic." [Laughter]

RL: But on the other hand, I heard--

Huff: In a sense, democratic, I think. It has to be also, to a certain extent, hierarchical. I am certain it is inevitable--I was never told so or shown it--that others on the staff looked upon me and Charles and Dick as the big three. [Laughter] They couldn't help but feel that.

But one policy--I'm so glad to be out of it--I did try to pursue religiously, and that was to treat each person's work when I was discussing it with him as just as important as mine. I tried never to let a person feel that what he was doing was menial or unimportant, and this policy certainly was rewarded especially, conspicuously, in the binding division. No one from other libraries here or abroad visiting failed to notice the condition of the collection.

Funding

Faculty demands are increasing, especially in modern China, but did not exhaust book funds.

E.A.L. Annual Report, 1953

This new cumbersomeness [for placing a book order], however, was not embarrassing to the point of showing a credit in book funds at the end of the year.

E.A.L. Annual Report, 1954

The Library will stumble or halt but by that degree to which low, confining book funds fetter it.

E.A.L. Annual Report, 1965

If we lived in times as wise as prosperous, scholarly librarians or other scholars could be engaged to compose descriptive book catalogues of those parts of the collection that are distinguished and known to few.

Annual Report, 1966

RL: Now, through the years that you were head of the library in the '50s and '60s, would you care to comment on the funding arrangements, perhaps starting with your annual budget and how adequate you felt it was?

Huff: Well, I suppose there were two factors involved in the slice of Mr. Coney's annual budget which he allocated to us. One factor was the amount he had been granted, which varied, naturally, and the other

Huff: factor was our growth of staff, of collection, and therefore of binding needs and such things. I always felt that the budget was reasonable.

After the final decisions had been made upon it for the library system, I think in July, Mr. Coney sent copies of the whole thing to the heads, and I think that was one of the subjects of one of our monthly staff meetings. I used to, naturally, compare what we received not only with years before, but with other branches. It was certainly fair in regard to the East Asiatic Library, and I know that some of the branch heads thought that it was too generous.

RL: Oh, really?

Huff: There had to be people, and of course there were, who thought that after all, who needs Chinese and Japanese? [Laughter]

We had some special funds. I think I have described the Fryer fund and the Carpentier fund. I forgot to mention, and maybe you will want to put it in where it's appropriate, that after Richard Irwin's death, I suggested in some account I wrote that anyone wishing to make a commemorative contribution should write a check payable to the regents and write across the bottom left hand corner of the check "Richard Gregg Irwin Memorial Chinese Book Fund." Those checks started coming in to me when I was still in the library in 1969, and the last I knew the fund had several hundred dollars in it. I have no idea now what may be in it, or whether it's even been used.

RL: Who served on the Carpentier fund committee?

Huff: Mr. Coney named the committee every year, and I was always on it, and I think I was the only librarian on it. I think there were four or possibly five faculty members, which he drew from various departments. There certainly was always at least one member from Oriental Languages. There was always one from History. Political Science, because Political Science was more vocal [laughter] than many others. Sometimes one, I think, from Art. Mr. Eberhard, sometimes, from Sociology. There was also a representative for Indian and for Southeast Asia studies.

RL: And its purposes were--?

Huff: To discuss the income from the Carpentier fund for that year, the year beginning, and to give each member of the faculty a chance to

Huff: say if there was anything particularly expensive--you know, thousands of dollars--that he wanted, or to say, as one at least did once. "You're neglecting my field."

RL: Apart from the big Mitsui, were there other times when you received special funds from the regents?

Huff: Well, the Murakami, of course, preceded the Mitsui. I mentioned that.

RL: Yes.

Huff: That was from the regents. [Pauses to think] My salary in the month I spent in Seoul could be considered in terms of money.

RL: I'd like to ask about that. First off, I was going to ask you whether you had any responsibilities or leverage for fund-raising as the head of the library. Were you responsible for funding in any way?

Huff: No. I remember that Professor Bingham in '48 or '49 wanted to start a Friends of the East Asiatic Library, which would have drawn me into that kind of activity, though that was not the reason I opposed the idea.

RL: Why did you oppose it?

Huff: Woodbridge Bingham went to Mr. Coney and proposed a Friends of the East Asiatic Library, recognizing the flourishing and the success of The Friends of The Bancroft [Library]. Mr. Coney wrote me a memo about it and said, "Please come to talk with me about it," at a specific time.

So, I thought about it and decided in my mind that I'd rather have none of it, that a group of people interested in west coast history were likely to be a much more homogeneous group than a group interested in a collection of Far Eastern books, which would include several races, which would in all likelihood lead to a sense of competition.

So, when I went to see Mr. Coney, I said, "What do you think?" He said, "I want your opinion first," so I gave him mine, and it was very critical. I said, "Now, please tell me yours." He said, "Exactly the same." Some of his reasons were different. He said, "It's very costly. It does take time." If you put out a beautiful-- what is it called? A newsletter, that The Bancroft Library prints?

Huff: That takes quite a lot of time. The annual meetings, the sometimes rather extended relations with various of the Friends. And Mr. Coney said, "I think you're wise not to do it," so we didn't. Now it's been done, of course. I have no idea of how it goes or anything about it. But I never regretted that decision.

The small Korean community in the Bay Area, the very large Chinese and Japanese communities, some of whom would, I am sure, have been very interested--some of the people would have been very interested in knowing about the library. But it would have been difficult. It would have been a difficult diplomatic thing, I think, to have had to organize and then to continue to manage such a group. It could be done. In those days, I didn't have an extra hour a day to my name.

RL: Then, in terms of foundations, did you have access to their funding, or did they approach you?

Huff: I can only recall two foundation grants, a small one from Rockefeller for the purchase of Japanese books, and one from the Asia Foundation.

The Asia Foundation and a Korean Microfilming Project

RL: Could you tell me about the Asia Foundation grant?

Huff: The Asia Foundation had been set up in San Francisco, and its publicity writings, notices, articles, and papers always said that it was a foundation formed by a group of San Francisco and peninsula businessmen to promote friendly relations between this country and the Far East, and that was the word that was being given out still in 1956. The Asia Foundation had offices in several cities, including Seoul in Korea.

I was called one day in the spring of '56 by a young man at the San Francisco office who asked if I and a photographer would be willing to go to Seoul for a month or so and examine the archives, which were then stored in a relatively new wing of the Seoul National University Library, a cement building, a fireproof building, because someone, presumably in Seoul, had requested that the Asia Foundation support the microfilming of the archives and rare books.

Huff: I said that I'd be willing, though I didn't know Korean. Of course, the books were, with the exception probably of one or two, in Chinese. I said that I would be willing to do it, but that I would have to speak with Mr. Coney.

So, I talked to him about it and to William Hawken, who was then head of the library photographic service. Mr. Coney, I think, spoke with President Sproul about it, and it was agreed that if the Asia Foundation paid our travel and lodging and board, the university would give us both the month with pay.

So, William Hawken and I had two or three--as I recall, three--martini lunches with members of the Asia Foundation in the city and made our plans and flew off very early in June. The Asia Foundation insisted that we go first class--the only experience in my life--on a Pan Am flight to Tokyo. In Tokyo, we stayed overnight and then flew to Seoul. That large plane landed in a muddy so-called airstrip opposite a building that was much smaller than the plane, a small white clapboard building with a great sign across the top, facing the field, saying, "Seoul International Airport." [Laughter]

William Hawken and I struggled in, claimed our baggage, went to the information desk, and asked how we might get a cab. The building was jammed. The plane had held more people than the building could. The pleasant young girl at the information desk, who spoke quite good English, said, "I don't think there are any." [Laughter]

We didn't know what to do and stood, because the airport is some way--I don't know how far from the city, but it's a long way out.

A very dour-looking couple, who turned out to be American missionaries, no doubt from the Midwest, had been standing nearby, and at length the husband of the couple turned to me and said, "Where do you want to go?" I said, "The Bando Hotel." He said, "Well, I guess we can find room for you in our car."

So, we climbed into the back seat of an ancient sedan and were dropped off at the Bando with profuse thanks to the couple. I think the wife never did utter a word. I think the man said, "Oh, it's all right." [Laughter] I've met so many grumpy missionaries on my various trips.

Huff: We went into the Bando. It was a post war building, a very dreary place. We checked into our rooms, and on the following Monday, I think, which was probably two days later, went to Seoul National University and met the librarian. He had known, of course, of our coming, and we made arrangements.

He led us to an office next door to his in the building, and to my horror to this day--I have a picture of it--there was a great board, about one foot by two or three feet, height first, [gesturing]: "Dr. E. Huff." [Laughter] I never found much use for the room because I was in the stack all the time! It was sweet.

Well, soon after we arrived, and I can't say whether it was before we made our connections with the university or a day or two after, I was called by the then representative of the Asia Foundation in Seoul, whose name was Mary Walker. She reminded me that we had been at Mills at the same time, and I then thought I remembered her, but we hadn't known each other well. She entertained us at dinner. She had a very pretty house--part Korean, part Western--and all was pleasant.

Not long after that, I was walking on the street toward the hotel when an American woman caught up with me, a tall, white-haired, rather handsome woman, who said, "You're new in the hotel, aren't you?" I said, "Yes," and I told her who I was and why I was there. She told me her name, which I have forgotten. She was representing a foundation based in, of all places, Santa Rosa, and she was out to Korea to devise ways of helping young Korean women improve their lots. She had just come back from an investigation of some kind and said she had come to the conclusion that the best way to help them was to subsidize the establishment of a beauty school. [Laughter] Permanents for Korean women, I guess. She lived in the hotel on a different floor, and we went up in the elevator, and we parted. I never saw her again.

Not long after, maybe twenty to thirty minutes, there was a call in my room. I answered the phone and the voice at the other end said, "This is Mary Walker. I suppose you know that I can have you flown back to America tonight."

RL: Why? What had you done?

Huff: [Laughter] And with that, she hung up. I had said to the Santa Rosa woman, "Tell me something. In America, I always understood that the Asia Foundation was a federal agency, and my friends in

Huff: Tokyo, at whose home I had attended a dinner party before I came on here, said everybody knew that it was. Why is the publicity to the effect that it's a private thing started by kind-hearted businessmen?"

Well, that was the reason. That could have been the only reason. That's why I suppose I'm on one if not more of the CIA, FBI, I don't know what, lists.

RL: Do you suppose, or have you checked it out?

Huff: It's not that important to me. I haven't checked it out. I just assume so. I think it's almost inevitable.

RL: Well, to return to library matters [laughter], was the trip worthwhile in terms of your professional judgment?

Huff: Yes. So far as I know at that time there was no proper catalogue of the collection. There were perfectly lovely books in it. Many of the documents were in such condition that they couldn't have been filmed. They had been rolled, the paper had become brittle, and they couldn't have been unrolled without disintegrating.

The Asia Foundation did not go ahead with the filming. I recommended it, as I recall, in the report I wrote for them, for it [chuckle], and five or six years later the books that could be reproduced were published in beautiful facsimile. The library has a set.

RL: Was that done in Korea?

Huff: Yes. And when Peter Lee reviewed the Asami catalogue, he spent most of his review in condemning it for not mentioning the fact that the Asami catalogue did not contain those beautiful publications, facsimiles of the documents and old books. If he'd read the preface, he would have seen that finis was written to the catalogue by Chaoying Fang in 1961, before the first one of those books appeared.

Gari Ledyard at Columbia, and he may have been prejudiced because he had been a student at Berkeley, wrote such a laudatory review that I felt as Joe [Levenson] told me he felt about a review of his second book: "I came all over dewy-eyed." [Laughter]

Relations with the General Library

RL: As a department head, could you discuss your relations with the General Library?

Huff: Yes. They were, I'm sure, compared with other department heads' relations, limited--chiefly with Mr. Coney. In later years, when he became overwhelmed, and even later years, when he was in rather frail health, I reported to the associate librarian. At the end, I was reporting to Mrs. Worden.

I attended heads' conferences every month, and I made a comment only once in all the years. [Chuckle] The heads' conferences were monthly. The topics were quite rightly ones that interested people in the main library and in all the branches except E.A.L. Some of them were quite technical, quite over my head. Sometimes I felt an inspiration, in feeling so cornered, sitting silent through those meetings, to burst out in a stream of rather poor Chinese [laughter], but I never did.

I had rather close relations with people like Dorothy Kesseli, the head of Serials. Binding was also under the Serials Department, and we had much to do with the Binding Preparation Department or Division--Division, I think.

With such branch libraries as wanted to borrow some of our books on what we used to call departmental loans, which are more or less indefinite--Biology was one--not many books, but some, often bilingual--Art, Architecture, a few to Chemistry. Those heads I got to know for the good of E.A.L. [chuckle] so that we'd be on good terms, or if anything went wrong in those departmental loans, we could set it straight.

I knew the head of the Catalogue Department, Doris Higgins, very well because some one of her cataloguers would occasionally have a book that had obscure, to her, Far Eastern names in it that would be essential to her, she thought, for assigning subject headings, for example, and she wanted to be sure of the spelling and, where it was appropriate, of the meaning, or of the location.

The head of the Order Department, Dorothy Keller, I knew well because our orders, though they couldn't be read in her department [chuckle], most of them, went through her simply as part of the system, and the bills were paid by her bookkeeper, a marvelous

Huff: woman, Marie Korver, who is now retired and has become a beautiful designer and tailor herself of tennis clothing.

RL: Oh! [Laughter]

Huff: [Laughter] Isn't that amazing!

RL: How interesting. When you spoke, what did you speak on, at the heads' meeting?

Huff: That one time?

RL: That one time.

Huff: Well, the discussion was of binding. The standards were beginning to slip, it was felt. Mr. Coney was not primarily an aesthete, but there were some people, and I was probably one of the worst, who felt that a good book should be given a good cover. And the question of quarter binding came up. You know what that is. Several people had spoken about the usefulness of it and the cheapness of it and so on and so forth. Others had spoken of the fact that it was being given to books that were worth more. That wasn't true in E.A.L. because I was never restricted in my binding fund.

And I said, 'Well, the objection I have is that after the quarter bind is bound, the slicer often doesn't cut the righthand edge parallel to the binding edge.' Mr. Coney said, "It does not make any difference to the reader of the book." [Laughter]

Relations with the Centers for Chinese and Japanese Studies

RL: When the Centers for Chinese and Japanese Studies were set up in the late '50s, how did you feel about their starting libraries?

Huff: The first knowledge I had of the Center for Chinese Studies, I think, came from Esther Morrison, to whom Professor Bingham introduced me when she came to be--what do they call the position?--assistant research historian--anyway, she was running the show.

She, of course, before she talked with me, talked to the men who were working at the Center. W.S. Chi, I suppose, was already there. He's been one of my favorites. And so when she talked to me, she knew that what they were going to be working on was not

Huff: modern but, in fact, contemporary materials. A large part of their acquisitions was to be serial for that reason--newspapers and other serials, periodicals--and reference works, which they would keep until they were superseded. So, we agreed that the Center would fix certain dates. Perhaps when a newspaper file was a year old, the last issue, or journal, something like that, or when a reference work had been superseded, those materials would be given to the E.A.L., that E.A.L. would faithfully keep, bind, and catalogue anything not a duplicate, and then try to sell the duplicates. Well, needless to say, we never received anything from the Center.

RL: Really?

Huff: They never discarded anything. That was a good system; it would have been. It would have taken work on our part and on their part, but considering limitations of space and the closeness of the two libraries--even as it was, Mr. Chi borrowed constantly from us.

RL: That's extraordinary.

Huff: Esther Morrison wasn't there many years. She became a professor at Howard University.

RL: What about the Center for Japanese Studies? Do they have a library?

Huff: Not so far as I know. I was never asked or told about it. It was up off campus some place at one time, wasn't it?

RL: Yes.

Huff: The old Anna Head School?

RL: That's right.

Huff: Dick Irwin worked half time for the Center for Chinese Studies in 1962, helping them build up their microfilm collection from the Union Research Institute files. They had a special grant of a hundred thousand dollars from President [Clark] Kerr.

I always had some reservations about collaboration with the Center because I felt that the E.A.L. had a responsibility to keep and build a broad and substantial collection for all of its readers in classical, modern, and contemporary Chinese studies. I think I said something like that in one of my annual reports. [1958]

VIII CODA

The Chinese Bibliography Course

RL: How did it come about that you were asked to teach what became the famous course in Chinese bibliography?

Huff: I think I had been in Berkeley about a year. I think it was in the spring or summer of 1948, probably spring, that Professor Boodberg came to me one day and asked me if I'd be willing to teach a course in bibliography. I had never heard of such a thing for Oriental studies. There hadn't been such a course at Harvard in my day, and I was rather taken aback.

I said, "I'm not certain that I am qualified." He said, "After what you tell me of your studies in Peking and book collecting, you're much more qualified than many people would be." I said, my usual response, "I'll talk to Mr. Coney about it," which I did. He was delighted.

It was one of Mr. Coney's most admirable traits, I think, that he longed for more intercommunication among the faculty and library staff than could ever be achieved probably, but that was one way of doing it, and he was perfectly delighted with the idea. He said, "I'll make a financial arrangement with Mr. Boodberg."

So, it was determined that Mr. Coney would always specify my rank and salary, and that the Department [of Oriental Languages], according to the hours I taught, would pay a certain percentage of that, and the library the other.

So, I began to teach, I think, in the fall of '48. The first two or three lectures were difficult. I probably worked too hard and felt too nervous, and there were too many people. There must

Huff: have been twenty-five at the beginning. Needless to say, most of them dropped out after the second lecture. [Laughter] Some of them were Chinese students who were from other departments and who were looking for what we used to call snap courses, and others simply hadn't had enough language to follow. I lectured in English, of course, but I never included--well, with rare exceptions of outstanding reference works, I never included Western works on Chinese subjects.

In that first year the only student I remember was Richard Miller. I had known him and I remember him there. I can't remember any of the others.

I continued that course through '68. Then the chairman of the Department of Oriental Languages asked Richard Irwin if he would take it up. He agreed to, and I gave him all of my notes. He became a little shy in the fall and said he thought he wouldn't. So, the chairman, who was then, I think, Michael Rogers, asked John Jamieson if he would take it, and John agreed to, so my notes went on to John. I suppose John taught it. I haven't followed up on it. I don't know.

I was looking at this second, slighter volume of lecture notes and since, as you say, I look at these things from the point of view of one saturated in the subject, you have a much better objective view of what's interesting to people who might read it.

RL: What did the course cover?

Huff: All sorts of people asked for copies of the notes. This is a covering note I wrote to Harold Shadick when I sent him a photocopy of it. Well, would you like to read the contents? [Hands interviewer notes] These are the lectures. I don't know what's interesting. Not the whole thing, certainly.

RL: What did the course cover?

Huff: My first lecture was The East Asiatic Library, its history, book selection, catalogues, arrangement of books.

The second one was History of Written Records and Book Manufacture, then History of Printing, then classification from Han to T'ang, and that was probably the one you're thinking of. Oh, that isn't it. No, I don't know which one was lost. That wasn't it. The fifth was a translation. I had always three or

Huff: four passages of translation during the course, and the second semester of the course was entirely translation, from the Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu, which you must have memorized by now. [Chuckle]

RL: Thank you. [Laughter]

Huff: Then Biographical Reference Works, Geographical Reference Works-- Then ts'ung-shu. We probably haven't mentioned ts'ung-shu. Those are great collections of texts, often but not always on one general subject, which are published at once, in uniform format. You see, those large sets [gesturing with glasses at loaded shelves] are all ts'ung-shu. Sometimes they're reprints of books in one private library issued in a regular and a consistent format; some are only of history, some are of everything, history and the arts and so on, very important in Chinese book publishing.

Then the next lecture was on the catalogues and indexes to the contents of those. Next was a translation. Next catalogues in the Sung Dynasty, and then next from the Ming Dynasty to the Ch'ing Dynasty, a translation, then catalogues of public libraries, catalogues of private libraries, and the Ming Dynasty next, then the Ch'ing Dynasty. Those two subjects, or one subject in two periods, took three lectures. Next a translation. Next t'i-pa. I don't know how to explain t'i-pa. It was common practice in Chinese book publishing to have not only a preface, often printed at the end of the book, and sometimes several prefaces, but also t'i-pa, which were often appreciations of the text by a scholar, who might have lived many, many years later. But his name was important enough to make his judgment or criticism valuable, and it was printed in the book, sometimes printed in a facsimile of his own hand, therefore sometimes very hard to read.

And then translation, then examination.

RL: Did you also discuss what I can only think of as Night Thoughts, texts for reading in bed, Pen shih shih?

Huff: That was the text I translated in the '50s, anecdotes. No, I think that's too slight a text for me to have brought in. Well, no, perhaps I did as sort of a forerunner of pi-chi. It could have been. I don't remember. I'd have to read the notes to remember.

RL: How was this course received by the students?

I. Discuss one of the following topics.

Book classification in China

Ch'ing dynasty book collectors

II. Identify the following works.

七略
 中國隨筆索引
 歷代輿地圖
 白氏六帖事類集
 夢溪筆談
 滄浪詩話
 津逮秘書
 玉函山房輯佚書
 直齋書錄解題
 四庫未收書目提要
 讀書敏求記
 皕宋樓藏書志

III. Translate and annotate as far as possible:

北堂書鈔一百六十卷
 唐虞世南撰北堂者隋秘書省之後堂猶未入唐
 時所作也凡八百一類多摘錄字句而不盡註所出不及
 歐陽詢書首尾完具又原本為明陳禹謨所竄改亦非
 其舊然所引究多古書故考證家猶援以為據焉

Calligraphy by Suzanne Pon

Huff: Well, it was never wildly popular. [Chuckle] Enrollment dropped. I should say that in the last fifteen years perhaps an average of ten people would enroll each time, and three or four would drop out in undisguised horror. [Laughter] That's the way I remember it. It's approximately correct.

I had expected that Professor Boodberg and perhaps the whole awesome professorial department would come and sit at the back of the room and scowl [laughter] to see how I was doing, but they never did!

RL: Didn't you have any faculty auditors?

Huff: [Pauses to think] Woodbridge Bingham told me he was going to audit it and never did come. Joe [Levenson], I remember, asked me if he might come, and I was terrified. I stood in such awe of his learning. Did he come? I think not. I don't remember.

RL: I thought he did, but perhaps not.

Huff: Well, perhaps he did. I remember my first response--we were speaking together in the departmental office--was, "Oh, no!" [Laughter]

RL: You told me a story about one of your students who didn't do so well.

Huff: Yes. It was in my first or second year of teaching. A Chinese girl, I think of an Oakland family, who didn't do very well as the weeks went by, but then she undoubtedly had not had the opportunity of Chinese education at home. In any case, in that term, instead of having a final exam, I decided to ask for term papers. Each student might select his own topic, which I should approve before the paper was written.

I don't remember how the particular student phrased it. She brought books or bibliography into the title, but Confucius was also there. The paper came in and was a kind of a general undergraduate essay on the man Confucius. I thought it was very peculiar; it couldn't have been written for this course.

I asked Edward Schafer if that student were taking a course from him, and he said, "Yes." I said, "Did you assign a term paper?" He said, "Yes. She wrote a reasonably good one on Confucius." I said, "May I see it?" He said, "Of course." Except

Huff: for the title, it was identical.

So, I marked it "F," and explained very carefully to her why, and I couched my language in, I thought, polite terms, but that this just wasn't done in American universities.

I never saw her again, but her father called me soon thereafter. I can't remember at all what words he used, but the implication of his message was that if I didn't change her grade to at least a "C," my life wasn't worth very much. [Chuckle]

RL: Did you ever hear what happened to her?

Huff: I imagine she dropped out of school. I don't know.

Early Retirement

RL: Why did you decide to take an early retirement?

Huff: Well, I'm sure there were several factors. I'd always wanted more than anything else to read and, if possible, to write. When we were well established in Durant, and then, I think, had got the additional space in Life Sciences Building--Dave, the janitor, used to call it Life of Science Building--I thought, "As soon as things are far enough along in catalogue control, for example, and control of the uncatalogued books, and the organization of staff, and the routines, I'll decide upon a retirement date." Then I inquired about the rules, which at that time--they're now changed--were for retirement a minimum of fifty-five years of age and of twenty years' service. And I would have reached those two in 1967.

So, I think in the spring of '67, I wrote a letter at home, it being a personal matter, to Mr. Coney, requesting that I be allowed to retire in December and giving him my reasons and saying that I hoped I was leaving the library, as I thought I was, in such good condition that could a capable successor be found, there should be no problem. I gave it to his secretary one morning, I think before he was in, and I didn't hear anything for several days.

Then his secretary called me and said, "Will you come to see Mr. Coney at three o'clock," I think it was, a certain afternoon. [She said,] "He wants to talk with you." I said, "Do you know what he wants to talk with me about?" "No, I have no idea," said the secretary.

Huff: So, I went in, and he was not impolite, but he was in a state of muted fury. [Laughter] He said, "I brought you here to argue with you." Well, I tried to be adamant, but when he made this point, I had to yield. His mandatory retirement date was at the end of June, '68; he would be required to retire at the end of June of 1968. I said, "Well, who will succeed you?" He said, "I have no idea. Of course, nobody's been chosen." I said, "It will undoubtedly be someone who knows not one-tenth what you know about the Orientalists in this country."

Mr. Coney had always been interested. When I came back from meetings in the East every year, he'd ask me about certain persons in libraries and so on, and he was quite well informed about them.

He said, "But my successor is going to have to live with your successor, and I'm not about to pick yours." Well, I could do nothing but agree, and that's why I did agree, and then worked until the end of June of '68, when he retired at the same time.

RL: And then what happened?

Huff: I came home and probably dusted my books and began to work. Well, I did flop for a few weeks. I mostly read things unrelated to the Orient and rested a good deal and then got into my old manuscripts and texts and was very happy.

I'd also acquired a small dog, which I'd promised myself upon retirement, and which I have sometimes regretted. [Laughter]

Then Richard Irwin died in December of that year. Mr. James Skipper had been brought in as Mr. Coney's successor, and he called Charles Hamilton and me into his office to talk about the position. Dick had been for some years then not only the Chinese bibliographer, but also the chief reference librarian. He'd been elevated for various reasons. Charles was acting head.

Mr. Skipper asked if I would come in and do Dick's work until they could find somebody, because to be without a permanent head and without a Chinese reference librarian and bibliographer would have been rather a shake-up all at once. I said I would go back if I need not be put on the payroll. I said, "I cannot go through the paperwork, particularly of being taken off of it, a second time!" [Laughter] He said he could arrange it, and he did. I said that I would be glad to work for nothing. I was able to live on what I had. He insisted upon paying me. I don't remember how it was

Huff: arranged, but there must be machinery for that kind of thing.

In '69, Raymond Tang was appointed head of E.A.L. and he started to work in July. He being Chinese and having had his university education in China, would be able easily to oversee the selection of Chinese books. So, I left the library at that point. He asked if I wouldn't stay for a while and overlap with him, and I said it would be unfair to him. I had left a rather full catechism for him [chuckle], which I think he paid little or no attention to.

Teaches Chinese Literature

Huff: Chen Shih-hsiang died in May of 1971. Michael Rogers was then head of the Oriental Languages Department. While Chen Shih-hsiang had been brought originally by Mr. Boodberg many years before to teach modern Chinese, he had worked himself backwards, so to speak [chuckle], into T'ang and finally he was back as far as the Book of Songs, the Shih Ching, in his last year.

Michael Rogers, having talked with the chancellor about a replacement, had failed to persuade him-up until August, I believe-- that people qualified to take a position like that, chiefly lecturers in medieval Chinese literature, were very, very difficult to discover, or if you discovered or knew of one, to dislodge from his position.

Mike finally evidently persuaded the chancellor or vice-chancellor, whichever, and it was agreed that he, Mike, might bring in a person for one year to give him a year to look, to scout. He asked me if I'd teach for a year, teach those courses, and I said, of course, "No. I'm by no means qualified." Mike said, "Well, you know this department. You don't have to teach precisely the texts that Shih-hsiang selected. You may select your own, and you needn't go back as far as the Shih Ching if you wish not to, and it will just be one lecture course and one seminar, and I'm sure I can bring you in as full professor, first step." I didn't even know what that meant, but in terms of salary it didn't matter. I said, "All right. I'll fail, but I'll do it if you're so desperate as you say. But I'll agree only on the condition that I not be paid. I will not go through that payroll again!" [Laughter]

Huff: Well, of course, I lost that one, and I was paid, I thought, handsomely, and I taught those three quarters and enjoyed it very, very much. I think I enjoyed it very, very much. I think I enjoyed it more than I had enjoyed the bibliography course most of the years I taught it. The students were all advanced students; I think no very young or inexperienced student or one ignorant of the department would have entered one of these courses. I think it was only the more advanced and, in general, the better ones who did. In earlier years I think Shih-hsiang taught more elementary courses, but he wasn't doing it then.

[From SLATE, a student course evaluation publication, Fall 1971, p. 63, "O.L. 212 Seminar in Chinese Literary History. Mrs. (sic) HUFF built up the East Asiatic Library virtually single-handed and so is known to possess vast bibliographic knowledge. She is known to be a dynamic and exacting teacher."]

Professional Associations

RL: How about professional associations?

Huff: I have been a member of the American Oriental Society for forty some years, but just in order to receive its journal and attend the meetings occasionally. The same thing is true of the Association for Asian Studies, which I'm not very fond of. I continue to send in my membership dues in order to keep up with news of people in the field.

Never having been to library school, I don't know whether I was ever asked to join either the American Library Association or the California Library Association. I should have refused, had I been. I probably wasn't, for lack of a degree in librarianship, and I'm not a great joiner, too little probably.

RL: But were you not on the Committee on East Asian Libraries?

Huff: Oh, yes. Automatically. That was formed of the heads of the Far Eastern Libraries in this country. Mr. Coney kindly every year found travel funds for me to attend the meetings. They were rather difficult meetings. Several of the members were well informed, had very interesting news to give of their own collections; for example, Edwin Beal at the Library of Congress, Wan Wei-ying when he was at Yale, and T.H. Tsien at Chicago.

Huff: There was, to my mind, a monstrously vulgar emphasis on the part of the majority of the members upon quantity, accession statistics. That undoubtedly still continues. To my mind it's totally meaningless. But there are various dubious factors involved: how you accession, for one thing. Each issue of a journal, or a whole bound volume of a journal? We gave one number to the bound volume. I still think accessioning is of volumes, not of publishers' units. But that's a personal thing.

RL: What did you feel your major contributions were to the C.E.A.L.?

Huff: I have never thought of it. I don't know that I made any. I think you'd have to ask someone else if I did! [Laughter] I held out to the best of my ability for continued use of the word "Asiatic," but I got nowhere.

Scholarly Work

RL: And turning to scholarship, which was your first love, what were you able to do during your years when you were head of the E.A.L.?

Huff: Practically nothing. As I probably said before, with the best efforts in the world over many years, I have tried to discard those parts of my Puritanical upbringing that I think are unethical. [Laughter] I couldn't. And once in the library, I really devoted practically all of my thoughts to it, even in the evenings. I'm sorry now that I didn't take a bit of good advice that Professor Boodberg gave me early on, and that was that however tired I was at the end of the day, if I'd just take one hour after dinner to work on something, I could keep my interest going, and, after all, perhaps 500 hours a year would produce something. I should have done that. I didn't.

I translated one text Pen shih shih the one year that I took my five weeks annual vacation at home. I've never done anything with it. I've never annotated it. I finished the translation.

The modicum of scholarship I have was helped in the library in the sense that in consulting booklists, seeing the new books that came in, and in pursuing some of the reference questions, I learned things that I shouldn't have learned just working on a text all day long. I'm now back to that.

Huff: One scholarly chore I rather enjoyed was serving on the board of the University of California's Chinese Dynastic Histories Translations series. I was named as one of the editors after the first volume appeared and remained to the end of the series. Each editor received a typescript copy of the next proposed manuscript. I was the one, you can easily imagine, who rapidly gained the reputation of being the stuffiest.

Several years ago I read a most favorable book review of a novel, the first, written by a woman who was then eighty.

RL: [Laughter] Hope for us all!

Huff: I'm now working on the text that I started working on in 1941, and my hope is to have the final draft of that complete by the end of this year depends, I think to a large part, upon how my vision improves.

RL: You did take it back East with you, didn't you?

Huff: I took the translation proper, yes.

RL: And how was it received?

Huff: Well, I showed it only to one person [laughter], and he was too laudatory.

RL: What did he say?

Huff: What did he say?

RL: Achilles [Fang], wasn't it?

Huff: Yes, it was Achilles. Well, when he called me at the Hightowers, he said, "It's marvelous." I said, "Don't be foolish," and he said, "Come in tomorrow morning and we'll go over it together," meaning come to his office, which I did. He had made marks, of course. Some of them were simply questions of taste in choice of English words. He's a marvelous linguist, but his native language is not English, and it makes a difference, just as mine being American English [laughter] makes a difference too.

He had struck out only two lines, and when he strikes something there's no mistaking it. [Sweeping gesture, shoulder to hip to indicate striking.]

- RL: How so?
- Huff: Oh, it's just a very thick line! [Laughter] I had triple-spaced the typescript, and he wrote in his version above. So, we went over those, and I had doubts, and he said, "Well, let me reconsider." He consulted a book or two and reread and in turn struck out his corrections and said, "You were right and I was wrong."
- RL: I've never heard of that happening with him.
- Huff: Neither had Robert Hightower. He said, "I'd have thought that I had reached the ultimate goal of all life if he had ever said that to me." [Laughter] But it was flattery, probably. I don't know.

Summings Up

- RL: And then we come to a category, "Summings Up." We have barely touched on where you've lived in Berkeley, and with whom--I'm thinking of your old friend and colleague, Maryon Monahan, to whom you've referred a number of times, Chin-po and Percy.
- Huff: I lived first in a small apartment at 1751 Highland Place, where, as I noted, I invited E.R. Hughes and his wife to tea. Next I lived in an apartment across the street, in a handsome Maybeck building. After that Maryon Monahan and I bought and lived in a succession of five houses, of which this is the last.
- RL: Have you been politically involved in university, domestic or international affairs?
- Huff: Never.
- RL: How used you to spend your vacations from the library?
- Huff: In automobile trips to northern and northeastern California, to New Orleans and Denver and the Southwest, over (1966) to Europe, and many times at home. Also to Guatemala and Yucatán, and over to the Hawaiian Islands.
- RL: What avocations do you enjoy, gardening, cooking, etc.?
- Huff: I enjoy redecorating apartments and houses, rearranging the furniture occasionally--typically female pastimes. Collecting

Huff: small Chinese and Korean and Japanese art objects when I find them.

RL: You mentioned in an earlier interview that you were glad you hadn't married.

Huff: It's very hard to compare the unknown with the known, since I didn't marry. [Laughter] There was only one period in my life when I passionately wanted to, and for Puritanical reasons having to do with my respect for my mother, I eschewed it.

RL: What was the circumstance? [Tape off briefly]

Huff: Everybody knows it.

My mother was a woman whom I admired in many ways. She was much more aggressive than my father, but much less broad-minded. She was aggressive and firm, and he was gentle and willing to learn. While neither of them had traveled outside this country, my father was eager to learn about the Orient and my experiences there, and my mother was interested only in respect to such things as I had accomplished. My father would have welcomed an Oriental son-in-law; I mean, it would have made no difference to him what race he belonged to. But I knew that Mother, who continued to live in Urbana, as did both my parents until their deaths--it would have in one sense of the phrase, which I think can be used in many senses, broken her heart. She did so much for me and it would have killed her. I simply couldn't bring myself to do it. Now, if it were this year, it would be different, even with Mother, I think. But it was the 1940s then.

I have no feelings of a misspent life. [Laughter] I enjoyed my studies, and I loved Peking and cherish the memory of the years there. I like Berkeley very much for all of its extremes. I think it's a stimulating city to live in. And I certainly loved the library as it developed, not just from my efforts but also from the efforts of all my staff.

I have never regretted aging, a characteristic which my sister, three years younger, cannot understand. [Laughter] She's married. Maybe if you marry you're more intent upon looking young, I don't know. [Laughter] I think there are very many aspects of later life--I suppose I think especially in terms of knowledge--that more than compensate for lack of the greater physical vigor of your younger life.

Huff: I know, for example, when I acquired this year a copy of the compact edition of the O.E.D. [Oxford English Dictionary] that it's a daily joy to me, and yet I know that had I had a copy of that dictionary--how many volumes? Twelve?

RL: I think so.

Huff: Had I had it in my high school days or even perhaps in college days, I shouldn't have got from it the great pleasure that I do now, because I shouldn't have read nearly so much by that time, nor have made all the associations that one naturally makes after so many years of mulling things over.

I'm past it now, but in the first year after my retirement, I found that I missed the daily contact with many people, and I did find that I missed it not enough to distract me. But at the end of the day, I'd think, "Oh, I wonder what So-and-So was talking about today in the library," or something. Now I don't feel it at all.

Charles Hamilton asked me yesterday if I was come all over stage fright when I saw the tape in front of me [chuckle], and I said, "No, I didn't have any such feeling." He said he was afraid he'd have such a feeling. But I said that you had been such a good and witty and clever interviewer that I had felt perfectly relaxed. He said, "I'm sure Rosemary was."

RL: Thank you! [Laughter]

Huff: Is that enough summing up?

Transcriber: Marilyn White

Final Typist: Keiko Sugimoto

APPENDIX

- "Far Eastern Collections in the East Asiatic Library of the University of California" from Far Eastern Quarterly, Volume XIV, No. 3, May 1955 262
- Book review on "Genre Theory in China in the 3rd-6th Centuries" From Journal of the American Oriental Society, July-September 1973 265
- Stanford-Berkeley East Asian Studies Newsletter, 16 February 1977 266

that required new quarters but also of a fair distribution among their kinds.

The main collection, of which a large part may be borrowed for home use, is a unit catalogued and arranged without segregation of languages. Thus Japanese editions and translations of Chinese classics or of the Tripitaka or of the poets stand beside their originals, and Korean historical works written in Chinese before the time of the Japanese domination are not separated from those written during the following era in a different tongue. The few thousand Occidental books which have been selected for reference or acquired by gift are disposed likewise. Classification is according to the scheme devised by Dr. A. K. Chiu. Although the number of Chinese books in each of the main classes exceeds all others, the Japanese collection with 90,000 or more volumes is quite two-thirds as large. No library can long show an impartial selection but must through changing needs and sudden fashions come to have more of one thing than of another, and so these parts of the main collection tend to overshadow other parts: Buddhist texts, archeology, history, gazetteers of the provinces Kwangsi, Kwangtung and Fukien, folklore, linguistics, files of old and new periodicals in the social sciences and arts, and bibliography. In materials on Korea, Formosa and the Ryukyu Islands, also, the collection is rich. Printings shelved in the stacks begin from the Chinese period Chia-ching (1522-66) and the Japanese Genroku (1688-1703). The important editions of the classics and the histories, the Chinese and Japanese series which, typeset or in facsimile, reprint the documents or the old literature of their countries, and the numberless *ts'ung-shu* and *sōsho* that buttress research in every field are not wanting, and the bibliophile will note rather the presence of Tokugawa imprints or some scarce publications issued by Lo Chen-yü or the many files of journals that include the ancient number one.

A library catalogue is a way to find a book to read in silence; one who can read his book, mispronounce as he will its author's name, can find and read the catalogue card which describes that book. Assuming as much, the East Asiatic Library staff when it began full cataloguing in 1951 developed a code which forewears the retarding and costly addition of transcriptions. The public catalogues are three: the Title-Author Catalogue, arranged in the orders of characters in the *K'ang-hsi tsu-tien*, followed by *kana*; the Author-Title Catalogue for works in European Languages, including entries for Oriental publications that bear added forms, in the Roman alphabet, of titles or author's names; and the Subject Catalogue, with English headings based on the Library of Congress List. The Union Catalogue of Chinese and Japanese Titles (single copies of about 88,000 cards from the National Library of Peiping, the National Central Library in Nanking, the Harvard-Yenching Institute, the National Diet Library of Japan, the libraries participating in the Library of Congress Cooperative Cataloguing Project) and the inevitably, lamentably long file which lists yet uncatalogued holdings are arranged like the Title-Author Catalogue. For all the diligence of the cataloguers, several years will

NEWS OF THE PROFESSION

Prepared by GEORGE M. BECKMANN

The following material was received prior to February 15.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Far Eastern Collections in the East Asiatic Library of the University of California

(The following report was prepared by Elizabeth Huff, Head of the East Asiatic Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.)

If a library is a mirror held up to its collectors, the East Asiatic Library in Berkeley reflects the image of a group that ranges from pioneer teachers of Chinese to workers in the many historical and scientific disciplines of today. Donors like Kiang Kang-hu, E. T. Williams and John Fryer, curators like Michael Hagerty, from 1916 to 1932 made for the University both a Chinese collection and a library: 22,541 volumes which were bound and classified and catalogued. Orders began to be placed in the Orient, and exchange agreements were confirmed with Chinese universities. The Main Library began to receive Japanese books onto its shelves. In 1941 Diether von den Steinen, then curator, was recording Chinese accessions in the number of 49,784 and making a plea "to integrate the Chinese and Japanese collections" by filing cards for both in a combined classed catalogue. When war came, it allowed little more than the development of a file called "Books to buy" and another named "Collections of reprints" (analytic cards for the *ts'ung-shu*). When the war was over, continually more instructors and more students requested books in Oriental languages. Therefore, the East Asiatic Library was established in 1947 as a department of the General Library, to catalogue, protect and make readily available all library materials written or printed in the languages of China, Korea, Japan, Manchuria, and Mongolia. At this time the collection comprised about 77,000 volumes, a number that was increased to 225,000 in three or four years with the acquisitions made possible by special grants for excursions to the Orient and for the purchase of three private libraries. The greatest of these was the diversified Mitsui Bunko. Titles conspicuously lacking were acquired, and without neglect toward the already voluminous classes of philology and history, monographs and series in subjects as separate as art and economics were sought. When the collection was rewarded in 1952 with the occupancy of Durant Hall, the sound and seemly building that as Boalt Hall had housed the School of Law for forty years, it was gratifying to suppose an acknowledgement not only of the quantity of Oriental books

pass before the last one of the books acquired from 1948 to 1950 and the last of the special collections is brought under full bibliographic control.

Separate rooms hold the several special collections. The largest of these is in the Rare Book Room, which in addition to copies of choice editions contains about 250 Chinese and 8,000 Japanese manuscript volumes and the Asami Library of old Korean books and manuscripts. The protean "rare book," defying rigid definition, here is tentatively called one which is of an edition printed in China before 1522 or in Japan before 1688; an edition that was issued in less than one hundred copies or is demonstrably extant in very few, or a copy made valuable by the autograph annotations of a famous person. Some 4,400 Chinese and Japanese volumes have been set aside on this basis. They include such various treasures as the Yüan dynasty *Chu Wên-kung chün Han Ch'ang-i chi*, with seals of Ch'ien Tsêng, Mo Yu-chih, Liu Ch'êng-kan, and the copy of the *Chi yüan pien* in which Wang Kuo-wei wrote long critical notes; the *Prajñāpāramitā* sutra (597 of its 600 chapters) from the 1384 Japanese printing of the Chinese Tripitaka; and the complete first printing of the *Wakam röishô*, of which Kawase Kazuma in 1943 wrote that no copy of the first volume was known to exist in Japan. The earliest manuscript in the Library is chapter 254 of the *Prajñāpāramitā* from the Tripitaka copied at Chün-su-shan, Chekiang, presumably in the T'ang dynasty. From almost a thousand years later there are 64 thin volumes of Weng Fang-kang's *kao-pên*, adorned by notes of second thoughts and occasional instructions to the printer.

The classical Korean collection was made by Asami Rintaro during his years of residence as an official in Seoul (1906-1918). It contains 4,150 Korean volumes in all the traditional fields of learning. Manuscript diaries of 19th century ministers and the facsimile *Yijo sillok* in 888 volumes offer extraordinary historical resources. For the history of printing, there are Koryô block prints from 1213 on and moveable type impressions which date from 1461 to the 19th century; for calligraphy, there are the lines written by King Yongjo in 1760 to commend his subjects upon the completion of a program to improve the waterways around the capital. More than a hundred rubbings from inscribed stones and a group of 18th and 19th century maps round out this collection.

The Tibetan, Thai, Mongol and Manchu collections, comprising together about 1,700 volumes, are shelved in a separate study room. The Tibetan collection, which is the largest among them, covers the fields of secular and sacred literature (exclusive of the *Kanjur* and *Tanjur*) in about 90 *pois* of Lhasa imprints and 300 *pois* from presses in Peking, Mongolia and Tibetan monasteries outside Lhasa.

The Murakami Library of Meiji Literature is the colorful one among the special collections. Some 11,000 volumes of novels and discourses published in that period of eager about-face from 1868 to 1911 display in solemn translation the wisdom of Samuel Smiles or in Victorian bindings exhibit Scott's

heroes in kimono; show earnest consideration of the manners of outlandish Western nations and experiments in new prose styles.

There remain to be mentioned those library materials which are not books. Chief among them is a collection of around 1,500 rubbings from Chinese stone inscriptions. Some of the rubbings were taken as early as the Ming dynasty; texts extend from the stone drums to Ch'ing dynasty monuments. Next door the Map Room holds its records in some 2,500 charts drawn and printed between the early 17th and 20th centuries. About 10,000 sheets of modern Japanese maps outline Asia and its parts, whence come to the Library today's pronouncements and tomorrow's archives.

Far Eastern Collections in the Hoover Library, Stanford University

In 1945, the Hoover Library undertook to expand its collections of materials on twentieth century political, economic and social change, hitherto largely concentrated on Eastern and Central Europe, to include China, Japan and subsequently other parts of Asia. For several years extensive field collecting programs were maintained in both China and Japan since only a fraction of the material required for modern social science research was available through normal commercial channels. Since 1950, collecting has actively continued but at a slower rate. The Hoover collections thus differ in their emphases from the major Far Eastern libraries in the United States. The 35,000 Chinese volumes, the 25,000 Japanese volumes, the periodical and newspaper files and the small Korean collection consist almost entirely of nineteenth and twentieth century materials. Earlier materials will shortly be added however, since the Stanford University Library's Far Eastern collection, consisting of the major sets, basic reference works and chief monographs on Chinese and Japanese civilization to the end of the eighteenth century, has recently been transferred to the Hoover.

The particular research strengths of the Chinese Collection are, chronologically:

1. Solid, basic coverage of Ch'ing Dynasty materials.
 2. Extensive but often incomplete files of the publications of successive central, regional and local governments since 1912 together with the periodicals, newspapers and other non-governmental publications useful to studies in history, literature and the social sciences. Holdings are best for the 1930's and early 1940's.
 3. A small but unique collection of early Chinese communist sources.
 4. Full coverage of Chinese communist publications since 1949. The collection includes approximately 5000 volumes of books and pamphlets published on the mainland since 1949, and files of varying length of some 400 communist periodicals. 26 such periodicals are currently received.
 5. Full coverage of Nationalist publications since 1949.
 6. Substantial holdings on the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia.
- The particular strengths of the Japanese Collection are:
1. Government documents.

2. Publications of political groups, especially the ultra-nationalist organizations of the 1930's and the communist and front organizations of the post war period.
 3. Biographies, memoirs and the collected works of individuals.
 4. The large published collections of source material in the fields of modern history, diplomacy, political science, economics, and education.
 5. Specialized monographs, particularly those relating to agrarian problems, the development of capitalism, political parties, and labor and peasant movements.
 6. Japanese studies of China, totalling nearly 5,000 volumes and including extensive holdings of Toa kenkyujo and South Manchuria Railway publications.
- The Curators of the Chinese and Japanese Collections, Professors Mary C. Wright and Nobutaka Ike, have, as one of their principal duties, the assistance of research scholars in the use of their collections. The Library is open to anyone with research interests in its special fields.

From Journal of the American Oriental Society, July-September 1973

Genre Theory in China in the 3rd-6th Centuries (Liu Hsieh's Theory on Poetic Genres). By FERENC TÖKEI. Bibliotheca orientalis Hungarica, XV. Pp. 177. Budapest: AKADÉMIAI KIADÓ, 1971. \$6.00.

During the last ten years or more, Ferenc Tökei has seen published numerous ones of his studies, and those in several languages. Most of his books and articles are in Hungarian, and at least some of those in French, German, and English, to judge from their titles and dates of publication, are translations of the original versions. He writes on antiquity and feudalism, economy, and, especially, on early Chinese literature, whose poetry he finds to be predominantly elegiac. The purpose of the work under review is "to find out: when, to what extent and for what reasons this basically elegiac character of the Chinese poetry—elegy and its subvarieties in particular—became conscious in the activities of Chinese literary theoreticians" (p. 9) and "to help in transforming this treasure of Chinese civilization ['southern Courts' poetry?—the antecedent is obscure] from exoticism to values 'suitable for us.'" (p. 87, note 28.)

The volume is difficult to appraise, for the title, after the book is read, must seem misleading to a conservative student of literature, and, further, he must hesitate to judge summarily the translations of an author who is

striving with an alien tongue. Of the 137 pages that follow the introduction less than one third are given over to English versions of the text of Liu Hsieh: in partial translation, chapter (*p'ien*) X, "Prayer and Oath"; XI, "Inscription and Admonition"; XII, "Mourning-song and Epitaph"; XIII, "Lament and Condolence"; XIV, "Literature of a mixed kind"; XV, "treating the genre of jest and enigma"; XXV, "letters and recordings"; and XLVI, "Beauty of the Objective World." There is little said of chapters VI and VII, on lyric poetry and song, but there are full renderings of XXIX, "universal . . . changing" and XLV, "The Order of Times."

That the author is sensible of the Chinese arts as art, there is no doubt, but it must appear to the reader untutored in the historical convictions of Hegel and Marx that theory here predestines aesthetic criticism, and one may wonder how *l'ung* ("universal") in the *Wen hsin tiao lung* "becomes identical with the concept of social determination and *p'ien* ('changing') with the realization of the concept varying from period to period and poet by poet." (p. 177) Further, it seems somehow improper to say of the *Wen fu* that "From the angle of principle it seemed that Lu Chi's aesthetics should only be 'implanted' with the principle of social determination, to supply directly his genial divinations and observations with a solid basis." (p. 77) Have we come far enough in knowledge of the past to measure the ancient artists in terms of economic history, called by Joseph Needham in a happy phrase "that broad meadow of flourishing speculation?" And can that be the truest rule to lay alongside the creations of the poet or the painter?

The absence of a bibliography in *Genre Theory* . . . is not a loss to be mourned; the book is short, and the references in footnotes are clear and relatively few. (For the passages that have to do directly with the *Wen hsin tiao lung*, Fan Wen-lan and Vincent Shih provide the preferred citations.) That Ferenc Tökei leaves his book without an index, however, is lamentable.

ELIZABETH HUFF
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY



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ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S NOTE

New Library Agreement **

The East Asian libraries of Stanford University (Hoover Institution) and the University of California at Berkeley (East Asiatic Library and Center for Chinese Studies Library) have recently concluded an agreement concerning use of each other's collections that accords to the faculty, students, and staff of one university the same user privileges as those enjoyed by equivalent categories of the other. Berkeley graduate students, for example, will receive the same user privileges at Hoover's East Asian Collection as Stanford graduate students. The user services provided at the three libraries will be comparable, though not necessarily identical, and borrowing will be subject to the recall procedures in effect on each campus. The new regulations in effect have been included in this issue of the newsletter as an insert.

A result of the deliberations of the Joint East Asian Library Committee (co-chaired by Professor Robert E. Ward of Stanford University and Professor David N. Keightley of Berkeley), this agreement opens the way to regular and frequent use of each other's East Asian holdings on a scale unparalleled in the history of the various collections. Collectively, the three libraries maintain holdings of over 650,000 books, more than 2,000 current and 18,500 non-current periodicals and newspapers, and over 12,500 reels of microfilm relating to the histories, cultures, and societies of East Asia, making this the single largest library of East Asian materials in the West outside of the Library of Congress. What is significant about the combination of these collections, however, is how well they complement each other. The major emphasis of the East Asiatic Library at Berkeley has been in the humanities and traditional period, while the East Asian Collection at Stanford is foremost in the modern political and social fields. Thus, those portions of the collections which do not overlap provide substantive support in depth to one another.

It is hoped that the combination of this agreement and the availability of bus service beginning on March 1, 1977 between the two main libraries will facilitate greater use of the East Asian materials on the

two campuses. For more information on this bus service, see insert.

The agreement will be in force for a period of one year and then reviewed to determine whether it should be extended.

K. Anthony Namkung

Title VI Developments

As reported in past issues, the House of Representatives marked up last May the Ford administration's request for \$10 M for NDEA VI and Fullbright-Hays 102 (6) (b) for 1977-78, thereby increasing appropriations for these two programs by \$5 M over the current 1976-77 level. The Senate's failure to act on this appropriation in the last session meant that a continuing resolution, which allowed spending at the same level as 1976-77, took effect when the session ended. At last, it appears that the Senate will pass a supplemental appropriations bill this month that is at least as generous as the House figure of \$18 M for the NDEA VI portion of the package. If so, the Title VI program will see a welcome increase from \$13.3 M to \$18 M or possibly more.

**The concordance reached between the East Asian libraries of Berkeley and Stanford is a logical and elegant continuation of the work of Elizabeth Huff and her colleagues who built separate institutions which yet complement each other. [Ed.]

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