

MOVING WORDS AND IMAGES: CHINESE RARE COLLECTIONS AT UBC

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This paper provides an overview of Chinese Puban (蒲坂) and Pang Jingtang (龐鏡塘) Collections at University of British Columbia (UBC) and the ways in which they integrate words and images from imperial China. Both collections were originally owned by Chinese elite families. UBC purchased the entire Puban Collection in 45,000 volumes from Macau in 1959; and received the smaller Pang Jingtang Collection in the year of 2000 from Mr. Paul Fang in Vancouver BC. The collections include very rare and unique materials. While the Puban best represents Canton and southern Chinese civilization; The Pang Collection has its own focus on Shandong Province and connections with famed northern Chinese scholars. Both collections' moving routes represent the troublesome home country in the early 20th century.

The research value of the these rare Chinese books is explored in this paper based on real-life reference questions and the author's own study, including interviewing the previous owners' descendants, tracing other portions of the two private collections, comparing the same editions with other rare collections in the world, as well as in-depth research on the historical figures and mysteries identified from some unique items. There are three-fold sense of "moving" of these rare books: transported ancient materials from China to Canada; "moving" emotionally as cultural heritage and virtually as historical resources. I argue that with new technology, we can make the hidden collections move yet again. It is time for us to better evaluate the collections and select important materials for digitization, so that we can preserve and share our hidden treasure with scholars around the world.

The paper is organized in the following five sections with plenty of illustrations and examples.

1. OVERVIEW
2. MOVING ROUTES
3. RESEARCH VALUE
4. EMOTIONAL MOVING CULTURAL HERITAGE
5. MOVING THE RARE OBJECTS AGAIN