

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF SINOLOGICAL LIBRARIANS (EASL)

Minutes of the Thirtieth Annual Conference
Lyon, 8-10 September 2010

The thirtieth EASL conference was hosted by the Institute of East Asian Studies (Institut d'Asie Orientale) at the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon in France from 8 to 10 September 2010. The meetings were chaired by Maja Fuchs.

During the conference, two library visits and a reception were organised by the local host. There was a visit to the ENS de Lyon Library on Wednesday evening. On Thursday afternoon members visited the Chinese Collections Department and the Manuscript & Rare Books Department of the Municipal Library of Lyon (Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon) where they were given a wonderful introduction to rare materials by Ms Valentina de Monte and Mrs Hulvey respectively. On Thursday evening the conference participants were invited to a special welcome reception at the City Hall of Lyon (Hôtel de Ville, heart of the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage "Old Lyon") at which both the Deputy Mayor of Lyon and Maja Fuchs made warm speeches. The farewell dinner took place on Friday evening at the JOLS restaurant near the Institute.

Through the conference website (<http://easl2010.ens-lyon.fr/?lang=fr>) which was the first time in the thirty years of EASL, the host institution acknowledged the financial and material support from the ENS de Lyon and the Municipality of Lyon, and also expressed gratitude to the publishers and vendors in mainland China and Taiwan for their financial support for the organisation of the conference.

Present

- **Members**

Inga-Lill **Blomkvist** (Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Denmark)

Barabara **Bonazzi** (École française d'Extrême-Orient, France)

Feng Yi (Institut d'Asie Orientale, ENS de Lyon)

Katarina **Feriancikova** (Institute of East Asian Studies Library, Charles University, Prague)

Maja **Fuchs** (Library of East Asian Studies / Sinology, University of Vienna)

Roger **Greatrex** (Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University)

David **Helliwell** (Bodleian Library, Oxford University)

Kerstin **Herelius** (Uppsala University Library)

Xiaomei **Holder** (The University of Manchester)

Matthias **Kaun** (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin)

Angela **Ko** (University of Hong Kong Libraries)

Fung On **Lui** (Library of the Johann Wolfgang von Goethe-University)

Imke **Mees** (Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Köln)

Valentina de **Monte** (Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon)

Inga **Nyman** (Asian Library, Stockholm University Library)

Bent **Pedersen** (The Royal Library, Copenhagen)
Dorothee **Rihal** (Institut d'Asie Orientale, ENS de Lyon)
Sue **Small** (School of Oriental and African Studies Library, University of London)
Delphine **Spicq** (Collège de France, Institut des hautes études chinoises, Paris)
Soline **Suchet** (BULAC - La Bibliothèque universitaire des langues et civilisations)
Erik **Svanström** (Languages and Literature Library, Lund University; Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Denmark)
Katharina **Thölen** (Chinese Studies Library, Universität Zürich)
Shenxiao **Tong** (Edinburgh University Library)
Paul **Wijsman** (Leiden University, East Asian Library)
Zhu Xiaoming (Institut d'Asie Orientale, ENS de Lyon)

- **Vendors**

Rodney **Buhrsmith** (East View Information Services)
Hsiao-Yu **Chang** (Airiti Inc., Taiwan)
Teresa **Cheng** (East View Information Services)
Jason **Dai** (WanFang Data Co., Ltd., China)
Donna **Guan** (TBMC, Taiwan)
Simona **Han** (CNKI, China)
Lehmann **Klaus** (allegronet.de)
Li Jing (Beijing Founder Apabi Technology Limited)
He Lin (Shanghai Library)
Josephine **Say** (Brill)
Shi Qiang (Duxiu)
Paul **Verhaere** (East View Information Services)
Wang Tong (China Int'l Book Trading Corp.)
Xiao Zhifei (China Int'l Book Trading Corp.)
Newman **Yan** (CNKI)
Joyce **Zhang** (CNKI)
Zhang Aizhen (Duxiu)

Apologies

Attilio **Andreini** (Dipartimento di Studi sull'Asia Orientale, Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia, Italy)
Hiroko **Brittain** (Oriental Section, British Library, UK)
Alfredo **Cadonna** (Department of Asian Studies, Univ. Ca' Foscari, Venezia)
Charles **Alymer** (Cambridge University Library)
Gill **Goddard** (Western Bank Library, University of Sheffield)
Xiyi **Huang** (Brotherton Library, Leeds University)
Ane **Husstad-Nedberg** (Oslo University Library)
Graham **Hutt** (British Library)
Sergei **Kukushkin** (Russian State Library)
Anne **Labitzky-Wagner** (Institute of Chinese Studies Library, Heidelberg University)
Hanno **Lecher** (East Asian Library, Heidelberg University)
Xiaowei **Li** (Westminster University Library)
Andreas **Mixius** (German National Library of Science & Technology)
Giorgia **Rinaldi** (Centre of advanced studies on Contemporary China – CASCC, Torino)

Stewart **Robertson** (British Library)
Annie **Troedsson** (Library of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Lund University)
Benedicte **Vaerman** (Oost-Aziatische Bibliotheek, Catholic University of Leuven)
Zhang Yu (Institut d'Asie Orientale, ENS de Lyon)

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1. Chairman's address and the welcome speech by the host institution

Maja Fuchs opened the conference by thanking the local host for organising the conference, followed by a warm welcome speech by Dr Guy Faure, Director of the Lyon Institute of East Asian Studies. Dr Faure also introduced his institution with 20 staff and 30 PhD students as being the third most important centre in France for East Asian studies.

Maja Fuchs then extended her warm welcome to all the participants and especially to members Paul Wijsman and Xiaomei Holder who joined the conference for the first time and to Angela Ko from the University of Hong Kong Libraries.

2. Minutes of the previous EASL conference and member reports

The minutes of the 29th EASL conference were approved.

It was suggested and agreed that the minutes could be kept shorter in the future. It was also agreed that in order to devote more time to discussion during the conference, member reports would be collected and collated annually by the Secretary after the conference from the EASL members and be made available as a separate annual document on the EASL web site with the minutes.

3. Reports on conferences

3.1 EACS conference in Riga

David Helliwell and Matthias Kaun reported that their presentation in the form of an open session on e-resources at the 18th EACS conference in Riga in July 2010 was very well attended. It was a very positive experience and both were impressed by the enthusiasm of academic colleagues over the topic. There was a general consensus that the way forward was to adopt a consortial approach. It was hoped that the next EACS conference in Paris in 2012 would expect EASL representation again.

3.2 Conference in Changsha on digitisation of historical newspapers

Matthias Kaun reported that he would be participating, as co-organiser and on behalf of EASL, in the above conference organised by Green Apple in October. One of the major historical newspapers in the program for digitisation is *Shenbao*. The project is expected to be completed in three years costing US\$15,000 with 75 years coverage. David Helliwell will also go and give a keynote speech.

4. Thirtieth anniversary of EASL

On Wednesday afternoon, David Helliwell, Katharina Thölen and Matthias Kaun were invited to give speeches to mark the 30th anniversary of EASL. David and Katharina, the only two founding members who are still actively involved in EASL, reflected on the early years and development of EASL. David has compiled lists of office holders, bulletins, and places of meetings for the past conferences. Katharina also showed a few video clips about changing roles of librarianship. Matthias's talk focused on the present and future of EASL, suggesting that there should be more collaboration between members and between EASL and EACS.

During the free discussions that followed, several observations and comments were made:

- The professional status of subject librarianship has been downgraded over the past thirty years. More emphasis is now put on management rather than on subject specialty.
- Selection of Chinese resources has become more challenging because of the huge volume of publications now produced in China every year with variations in scholarly quality.
- For future conferences more time should be devoted to members' presentations and to the discussion of technical issues as we used to do.
- For the recent two conferences database trials were arranged before the conference, but there didn't seem to be much discussion at the conference about the trials. It was suggested that one or a few of us could take on the responsibility of analysing these databases and present their comparative studies to the conference.
- It was suggested that the EASL Bulletin or a forum in some other form could be reinstated to advance professional interests.

4. Treasurer's report

Anne Labitzky-Wagner presented her Treasurer's report in absentia as she was not able to come to the meeting. There was an increase of € 3.03 in the form of interest from September through December 2009. As German banks calculate interests for the entire fiscal year – 1st January 1st to 31st December, the interests that have been accumulated in 2010 will be shown in next year's report. The total balance is €1,860.61.

5. Vendor presentations

The following vendors gave presentations about their resources:

- CNKI (Joyce Zhang) -- *What can CNKI help EASL*
- CNKI (Newman Yan) -- *CNKI to boost European Sinology & China Statistical Yearbook Database* (presented at the user group meeting)
- Apabi (Li Jing) -- *Founder Apabi – new resources, new platform, and new services*
- Superstar (Shi Qiang) -- *Duxiu and Chinamaxx*

- East View (Teresa Cheng) -- *Maximizing Knowledge with Minimal Budget and Space*
- Wanfang Data (Jason Dai)
- Shanghai Library (Lin He) -- *National Index to Chinese Newspapers & Periodicals : a secondary document database*
- Allegronet.de (Klaus Lehmann) -- *The New Allegro utf-8*
- TBMC (Donna Kuan) -- *The things which you don't know about Taiwan*
- Airiti Inc (Connie Hsiao) -- *Innovation of Knowledge & Service*

All the presentations will be posted on the EASL website for members to access.

6. Presentations of EASL members

The following presentations were given by members and a guest speaker:

- David Helliwell -- *A recently discovered gem : Tongren tu san zhong*
- Xiaomei Holder -- *The Chinese special collection of John Rylands Library*
- Delphine Spicq -- *OPAC of the Institut des hautes études chinoises Collège de France*
- Delphine Spicq -- *The Xixia Avatamsaka Sutra*
- Inga-Lill Blomqvist -- *E-resources of Asian Studies: survey results and discussion*
- Matthias Kaun -- *Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin and the digitisation of its East Asia collection*
- Matthias Kaun -- *Licensing issues*
- Angela Ko -- *Digital Initiatives on China by Hong Kong universities* (i.e. free, open access databases from Hong Kong)

Most of these presentations will be posted on the EASL website for members to access.

7. Discussions on EASL affairs

7.1. Library collections, library space and other library issues

It was noted that some libraries were transferring much of their printed collections to remote storage as electronic resources were becoming more prominent. For example, Oxford is moving 7.5 million books to a remote store in Swindon, while SOAS is moving 20% of its collection out of the library to an off-site store. Coverage of Chinese e-resources, however, is felt limited, as many standard bibliographies and important rare books are not there. There is a tendency to reduce shelf space for creating more study space for students.

Some libraries still rely heavily on printed books because the format of printed resources still has certain advantages over e-resources.

Concern was also expressed over relatively small material budgets and reduced role for subject specialists.

7.2. Collaboration on e-resources

Following Inga-Lill's presentation on her recent survey of Asian studies databases, there was much discussion about a possible consortial approach to database negotiations and shared licensing as a way forward. The general consensus was to explore such an approach.

Actions to be taken:

1. A working group should be established that consists of coordinators for each national or regional sub-group, led by Matthias Kaun. The following colleagues volunteered to be coordinators for each sub-group: David Helliwell (UK), Delphine Spicq & Soline Suchet (France), Inga-Lill Blomqvist (NIAS), Katarina Thölen (other European countries).
2. The coordinators will report to the working group, by the end of January 2011, on the following information from each institution on: a) the number of users; b) names of databases already available; c) the level of material budget; and d) interest and priorities. It was suggested that the recent survey on e-resources for Asian Studies among European institutions/libraries as presented by Inga-Lill could be used as a starting point or comparator.
3. Databases could be based on the Cross Asia list.
4. Matthias Kaun can start preliminary talks with vendors.
5. Inga-Lill Blomqvist will inform EAJRS and SEALG of the above actions taken by EASL.

7.3. Future conferences and sponsorship

There were discussions about the sponsorship issue for future EASL conferences. Two options were considered: a) to start charging a small conference fee and reduce reliance on sponsorship and b) to keep the status quo. It was recognised that the first option could lead to EASL having to be registered for tax purposes as well as having to do with accounting.

A vote was taken on whether to go for option one and therefore to become a registered or chartered entity. The answer was unanimously 'No'. It was agreed that we should keep the status quo, that is: a) EASL conferences will remain fee free; b) It is the responsibility of the local host to decide how to fund the conference; c) The local host should keep the Chairman and Secretary actively and regularly informed on progress and possibly sensitive issues.

8. Elections

The meeting accepted Shenxiao Tong's request to step down as Secretary. Maja Fuchs and Anne Labitzky-Wagner would continue as Chairwoman and Treasurer, and Erik Svanström was elected as the new Secretary. The Chairman and members at the meeting extended warm thanks to Shenxiao Tong for his service over the last four years.

9. Next conference

Paul Wijsman reported that the new Chinese Studies Librarian was yet to be appointed at Leiden. Because of this special circumstance Leiden would not be ready to host the next conference.

Thanks to Katarina Feriencikova's invitation, the thirty-first annual conference will be held Wed 7th to Friday 9th September 2011 at the Institute of East Asian Studies Library, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic.

The thirtieth EASL conference closed with an expression of thanks to Feng Yi and her colleagues Dorothee Rihal and Zhu Xiaoming for their excellent arrangements.

Shenxiao Tong
Former EASL Secretary
26 October 2010, Edinburgh