

**END OF FUNDING PERIOD REPORT**  
**LAUC Statewide Grants, Research & Professional Development Committee**

Primary Applicant(s): **Su Chen**  
Campus: **UCLA**  
Email: [suchen11@library.ucla.edu](mailto:suchen11@library.ucla.edu)  
Telephone: **310-825-1401**

**TITLE OF PROJECT:**

Time Period of Grant: 2016-17  
Amount of Award Received: \$2,749

**Original Abstract as Submitted:**

The proposed research project is to study the approximately 30 examination papers of Qing dynasty (1644-1911) and related archives at Library of Congress (LC) (<http://www.loc.gov/rr/asian/guide2007/guide-chinese.html>). The study is to understand the provenance of the 30 papers and the result may inform how the 500 examination papers were collected and came to UCLA from Qing Imperial Archives. As a common practice in Qing dynasty, after Imperial, Metropolitan, and District examinations were completed, the examination papers were collected and sent to Imperial, Metropolitan or District Archives for permanent keeping and in no circumstance the papers would be seen again.

The 500 examination paper collection are part of the Professor Yu-Shan Han's Library. However, after studying all related archives such as oral history, articles, letters and biographical sketches of Han, the questions of how, when, and where the collection was acquired is still unknown. The 5-day study of the 30 examination papers and related archives at LC may help to reveal clues of provenance of the collection at UCLA as all Qing examination papers were treated and stored in the same fashion.

Literature review showed that no research has attempted to study the provenance of the examination papers outside of China and Taiwan. The study will shed a light on how the Chinese archival materials in the Qing Imperial Archives come to the UCLA and LC. It would be an important contribution to the scholarship of Qing studies. In addition, studying provenance of a collection is an important research area of Bibliography.

**I. ACCOMPLISHMENTS and EVALUATION**

The study of the examination paper collection and related archives of Qing dynasty (1644-1911) at LC was conducted in the Asian Division's Reading Room between April 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The collection consists of 115 pieces of documents related to Qing dynasty examinations. However, after consulted the Special Collection Librarian at Asian Division and I was informed that there is no other archives related to the collection was found or accessed.

The collection was collected and donated by Mr. Kang-Hu Kiang, a literary scholar and politician who taught Chinese language and culture courses at University of California Berkeley in 1914-1920, then worked as a cataloger/bibliographer at the Library of Congress in the following years, and later served as inaugural Chair of Department of Chinese Studies at McGill University, Canada, from 1930 to 1934<sup>1</sup>.

The 5-days study allowed me to closely examine and assess the LC's examination collection. The study focused on characteristics, historical and literature values as a research collection. The collection can be categorized as the following:

1. 36 cheating-papers to be brought into examination rooms
2. 32 Imperial Court examination papers, fragments
3. 15 Hanlin Academy examination papers, one in its entirety, the rest are fragments. Among them, two papers belong to Mr. Kiang's ancestors, Mr. Kiang inscribed on the cover of the two papers provided their names and years obtaining the degrees
4. 12 Exemplary essays, fragments, some are Imperial Court examination papers and some are Hanlin Academy examination papers
5. 2 booklets documented the success passing of the Metropolitan examinations, both are Mr. Kiang's ancestors
6. Unused examination papers, fragments

The condition of the collection when was collected was not ideal, except one Hanlin Academy examination paper in its entirety, the rest of 46 examination papers was in pieces or fragments. The examination papers used from 1646 to 1905 were quiet standard, usually consists of 12 to 18 panels, and the panels were folded in accordion format, the earlier papers are 18 layers of highest qualities of rice paper to signify the importance of the examinations, particularly for the Imperial Court examinations. The collection at LC, however, consist of fragments, about 2 to 6 panels. Due to unknown reasons, the public information found in the LC's website did not specify this condition, which can be misleading and generate unrealistic expectations of the collection.

The 36 pieces of cheating papers are interesting, collectively they provided another side of the story of the examination culture in Qing dynasty.

The 12 exemplary essays in fragments reveals types of the essays would be selected to serve as models for others to consult. The exemplary essays are hand-copied version of excellent essays, and they were made available for whoever wish to consult and prepare for their upcoming Hanlin, Imperial, or Metropolitan examinations, but often, scholars and researchers mistakenly regard them as original examination papers and collect them, Mr. Kiang just like other did the same thing.

In comparison with LC's collection, the value of the UCLA's 500 examination paper collection is extraordinary in both quality and quantities. No doubt, the UCLA's collection is the largest collection in its kind outside of China and Taiwan. It is also most diverse in its kind in comparison

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<sup>1</sup> Su Chen & Juming Zhao. 2004. "The Guest Chinese Research Library at McGill University, 1926-1936" in *The East Asian Library Journal*. Autumn 2004, volume XI, No. 2, pp. 41-99. (The study was funded by the Research Grant of the McGill University Social Sciences & Humanities Foundation and Research Grant of Princeton University Library's Friend Association.)

with the collections at LC and École française d'études chinoises, as the collection contains nine types of examinations, even for Ms. Wanping Ren, Vice Director of the Palace Museum, an renowned Qing scholar and worked at the Museum for 26 years, indicated that she has heard or read about some type of examinations but never see with her own eye of a physical evidence to prove the some examinations indeed existed. In addition, the UCLA's collection is in excellent its entirety, which is extremely rare outside of China and Taiwan.

To probing the provenance of the LC's collection is one of the purposes of the study. Indeed, the study enabled me to confirm that between 1895 and 1930, there was a frenzy to collect examination papers among scholars and collectors when Imperial Archives decided to discard 8,000 sacks of archives. However, the collecting efforts were under the table and somewhat secretive according to literatures. The LC's collection is an evidence that even fragments of examination papers were collected by scholars like Mr. Kiang. This finding lead me to view the UCLA's collection in a new light that Professor Han's collection was assembled with extremely careful manner and was measured by his high standards in pursuing both historical and literature values of a collection. Because his knowledge as a historian and also as scholar who specialized on examination system of Qing dynasty has collected and preserved the history as original as he possibly can, and my appreciation to Han's effort in collecting the examination papers grew tremendously. Now, it is our responsibility to properly preserve them for many generations to come.

I have completed the project as intended with some modifications. I did not realize the LC's collection is in such dreadful condition when they were collected. LC provided excellent preservations to the collection, the fragmentations, however, undermined the collection as a whole. It probably due to lacking of knowledge at Kiang's end, which has seriously affected the value of the collection.

The impression I gained from the description about the LC's examination paper collection on the website is that the collection consists of 30 examination papers. My study of the LC's collection revealed that the collection mainly consists of fragments of two types of examination papers—Imperial Court examination and Hanlin Academy examination. This fundamental defection serious affects the historical and literature values of the collection.

I would strongly suggest anyone who has a research project should consider to apply LAUC-LA Research Grant. This is the second time my research was awarded and supported by the Grant. I would like to apply again to further my study on examination paper collection at École française d'études chinoises and other European institutions in order to further my understanding of the UCLA's collection.

## **II. IS YOUR PROJECT COMPLETED? Yes**

## **III. FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

Attached are both original budget plan and actual budget expenditure.

To summarize, the actual expenditure shown below are major categories:

Transportations:       \$739

Meals:	\$444
Lodging:	\$1,474

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<b>Grand total:</b>	<b>\$2,657</b>
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For actual expenditure for this research trip, please see attached excel sheet.

#### **IV. SHARING YOUR PRODUCT/RESULTS**

I plan to write a paper to introduce the UCLA's examination collection as well as my finding of the LC's collection. To my knowledge, there are two examination paper collections of Qing dynasty exist in North America. With serious defection of the LC's holding, its scholarly value is undermined but it is better than none. Also, as two separate collections could provide support evidence to another about where the archives were stored and later were discarded by the Imperial Archives.

The UCLA collection is worth to promote widely. The collection was carefully assembled by a historian who has deep understanding of examination system in imperial China. The richness of varieties is particularly shown the efforts of Professor Han to provide physical evidence of examination system. The excellent conditions capsulated and preserved by the collection and give a extraordinary chance to scholars a rare peek to the Qing examination system outside of China and Taiwan, it definitely a must-see and the most unique resource for Qing scholars around the world to explore.

#### **V. NOTE**

Information included in this report may be reprinted or posted on the web for dissemination to UCOP, other UC Libraries, and future potential LAUC grant applicants.