

## News from the Asian Studies Research Collection, Monash University

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Monash University Library's Asian Studies Research Collection (ASRC) was first established in the lower ground level of the Sir Louis Matheson Library in 1995, bringing together the Library's Asian-language print collections and specialist support staff with a dedicated service point and reading room to provide a 'one-stop shop' for Asian studies students and researchers. After 20 years there, looking out our windows at (appropriately) a bamboo grove, we are moving both upwards in the building and onwards to a new service model.

A major refurbishment of the Matheson Library has been the catalyst for these changes. In the lead up last year, ASRC staff were extremely busy preparing the collections for their move, including weeding low-use items to off-site store and making decisions about uncatalogued and donated material. In November, all the ASRC collections were relocated into their 'temporary quarters' for the next two years: a large compactus in another part of the Matheson Library basement. Given the complexities of the refurbishment and staged building works, we are fortunate to have been allocated this temporary space within the library building, where users can continue to browse and access materials directly, rather than the collections being sent off-site. ASRC staff have also moved and are now co-located with other subject librarians in the 'Arts faculty team'.

When refurbishments have been completed in mid-2016, the ASRC open access collections will have their own special refurbished area in a prominent position on the first floor of the Matheson Library. The special closed access collections, such as the Norodom Sihanouk Archival collection, the David Chandler Cambodia collection, the Balai Pustaka collection and the Southeast Asia Pamphlets, will remain in a dedicated compactus area on the lower ground level. However, a new model of service provision in the library, which includes a merger of library service points, has meant the permanent closure of the ASRC service point. In the spirit of 'mainstreaming specialist knowledge', we are working closely with library staff who service the 'Information Point' to maintain an appropriate level of assistance for users of the Asian Studies Research Collection.

Matheson Library staff have been waiting expectantly for a refurbishment for many years and finally the time has come for a new look as well as a new way of providing library support for Asian studies. ASRC staff are looking forward to seeing a transformation of the Sir Louis Matheson Library and an upgrade of the Asian Studies Research Collection area.

Since the formation of the ASRC, we have enjoyed a very close and productive collaboration with the East Asian Collection at the University of Melbourne, together forming Asian Libraries in Melbourne (ALIM). A major restructure at the University of Melbourne in late 2014 to reduce numbers of professional staff across the university has seen the departure of many long-term experienced and specialist library staff, including our valued and close colleagues, Bick-har Yeung and Michelle Hall, from the East Asian Collection. Their departure is a major loss not just for the University of Melbourne and ALIM but also the wider Asian library community in Australia and EALRGA to which Bick-har and Michelle have contributed so much. We wish them very well for the future and we look forward to working with those appointed to replace them.