

## **News from Monash University and University of Melbourne Libraries**

By Dr Aline Scott-Maxwell, Senior Asian Studies Librarian, Monash University Library

### New Shared Staffing Arrangements

Monash University and University of Melbourne Libraries have a long history of collaboration as Asian Libraries in Melbourne (ALIM) with a focus on sharing resources and expertise. A new era in this collaborative arrangement is underway with a decision taken to share two specialist Asian studies librarian positions.

This decision has come about due to pressure on staffing budgets and vacancies created following the departure a year ago of our long-term and highly experienced and valued colleagues, University of Melbourne Chinese and Japanese studies librarians, Bick-har Yeung and Michelle Hall, and also the retirement of Dennis Kishere, Chinese studies librarian at Monash, in 2013. Rather than attempt to service multiple Asian languages and studies by the appointment of a single librarian whose specialization might be in just one area, the shared positions enable retention of specialist language and subject expertise in both libraries. A Chinese studies librarian position has been advertised at the University of Melbourne that will be shared with Monash (0.7 fraction at Melbourne and 0.3 at Monash) and the present Japanese studies librarian at Monash, Ayako Hatta, will be shared with the University of Melbourne (0.7/0.3). Ayako has already commenced in this role. The expectation is that the new arrangements will also lead to further opportunities for collaboration and exchange in order to maximise support for Asian studies teaching and research at the two universities.

### ASRC becomes Asian Collections: Changes at the Asian Studies Research Collection, Monash University Library

A major refurbishment is underway at the Matheson Library on the Clayton campus of Monash University, leading to changes for the Asian Studies Research Collection (ASRC). In late 2014, the collection was moved from its previous long-standing location into temporary onsite compactus storage in the Library's basement. Difficulties in accessing and managing the collection increased in mid-2015 when asbestos was discovered in the roof of the basement and the whole collection had to be closed to users.

The good news is that the new area allocated for the collection is nearly complete. As of February 2016, the ASRC will be re-opened and available to users in its new, very central 1<sup>st</sup> floor location in the Matheson Library, easily accessed from the entrance lobby area. This very spacious area will house the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indonesian and other Southeast Asian collections. There will be tables and computer terminals for users and a dedicated area for displaying new books and current serials as well as featured displays from our special collections. Asia-themed art work from the Monash University Museum of Art will be hung on the walls and carpet insets with Asian designs taken from items in the collection have been specially made! The ASRC special collections, which include the Indonesian Historical collection, Southeast Asian Pamphlets, Balai Pustaka collection, Norodom Sihanouk Archival collection and many other rare or archival materials, will be housed in a closed access compactus immediately below the new collection area with options for some supervised browsing. Items from the special collections will be able to be consulted in the Rare Books reading room.

Accompanying the change of location is a new streamlined name: Asian Collections, which signals both its broad East and Southeast Asian scope (plus some South Asian materials) and diversity of material types. Accommodation of the Asian Collections in a premium and spacious location in the refurbished Matheson Library also signals Monash Library's continuing strong support for Asian studies.

Videos from the Norodom Sihanouk Archival Collection a hit on youtube!

The Asian Collections at Monash University Library have a growing online presence as materials from our special collections are progressively digitized and loaded into the Library's Research Repository. This digital collection includes a selection of documents, photographs, music and documentary films from the Norodom Sihanouk Archival Collection. The films have been uploaded to the Library's youtube channel and have been receiving very large numbers of views. Between May 2013 and October 2015, they received 33,231 views. It is interesting that the majority of viewers are in Cambodia (40%) followed by US, France, Thailand and Australia. As the cultural heritage of Cambodia and the Cambodian people, it is gratifying that we are able to, in effect, repatriate these films to Cambodia in their digital format while archiving the originals in Monash Library. According to youtube analytics, the top three films viewed were 'King Norodom Sihanouk interviewed by Chinese TV about Zhou Enlai, 1994', 'Presentation by Queen Norodom Monineath Sihanouk of the Museum Norodom Sihanouk' and 'Visit of Norodom Sihanouk to Khmer Rouge area near Thai-Cambodian border'.

We are presently digitizing another tranche of films from the collection, including some of the 1960s feature films made by Norodom Sihanouk himself, such as Apsara, Le Petit Prince and Ombre sur Angkor. We expect that these prove even greater youtube hits!