Wisdom of Rivers - Library Resources Exhibition

The wisdom drawn from rivers is an ancient metaphor for life and flow. The Library proudly presents the Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival (art reproduction) together with a slide collection of western paintings inspired by rivers of the centuries.

Date: 16 - 30 Nov 2010
Venue: P/F of the Library

The Original Piece of Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival

The original version is generally attributed to the Song Dynasty artist Zhang Zeduan (1085-1145). It captures the daily life of people in the Song capital, Bianjing, today's Kaifeng. The piece portrayed the atmosphere and commotion of the city and rural area at Qingming Festival, rather than the ceremonial rituals such as tomb sweeping and prayer. The entire piece was painted in hand scroll format and the content reveals the lifestyle of a wide spectrum of the society as well as different economic activities in rural areas and the city. It offers glimpses of the clothing and architecture of the period. The piece was sold changing hands among numerous private owners. Before it finally returned to public ownership. The piece was a particular favorite of the Emperor Pu Yi, the last reign of the Qing Dynasty. Emperor Pu Yi took it with him to Manchuria during his exile and thus kept the Song Dynasty original out of the collection of the National Palace Museum. It was not until 1945 that the piece was returned back to the Palace Museum inside the Forbidden City.

The Remake Version of Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival

The Song piece has been revered and artists of subsequent dynasties have made several re-interpretive versions. One of the remakes was painted during the Ming Dynasty (14th to 17th centuries). The length of this version is 6.7 meters, longer than the original. It also replaced the scenery from the Song Dynasty to that of the Ming Dynasty.

Another version was painted by five Qing Dynasty court painters (Chen Mu, Sun Hu, Jin Kun, Dai Hong and Cheng Zhida) for the Emperor Qianlong on 1737. The length of this version is even much larger at 11 meters by 35 cm. On the contrary to the original Song version of rural area, the leftmost side is still the busy city. There are allegedly 20 to 30 variations on this topic by artists of subsequent dynasties were made. Several Ming and Qing versions can be found in public and private collections around the world. Each version follows the overall composition of the original fairly faithfully; however, the details often vary widely. The Song Dynasty original is now housed in the Beijing Palace Museums and the Qing version is now housed in the Taipei Palace Museums.

About Our Special Collections and Slide Collection

Special Collections
The Collections houses unique, precious materials of reference and archival nature covering a broad range of topics and formats, spanning hundreds of years, including national and international standards, reserve books, theses and dissertations, University examination papers, personal articles and the PolyU Collection which includes various types of PolyU publications. Please consult the Special Collections Counter (ext.6874) for use of closed stack materials.

Slide Collection
The Collection contains over 260,000 slides on art, architecture, fashion design, graphic design and other technical subjects related to PolyU courses. The Hong Kong Tourism Board and the Information Services Department of the Hong Kong Government have accessed our collection for valuable images of Hong Kong. Users are welcome to ask for assistance from the Slide Collection (Ext. 6688) for locating the slides they need.

The Library has started to provide slides images on CDs since year 2000. These images, where copyright permits, are also made accessible online in the Digital Image Gallery of the Library homepage.

Collection Development
In the context of the Library’s mission to provide high quality information resources in support of the University’s educational and research missions, one of the prime objectives of the Library is to excel in its efforts to develop, manage, and preserve an outstanding collection. For more information, please refer to http://www.lib.polyu.edu.hk/colderv.