From the bit bucket

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In November 2002 we released our first Chinese interface full-text database. This new database showcases the life and activities of Dr Sun Yat-sen in Hong Kong with photographs, commentaries and other related material. This database is also our first database in XML and our first one to use Dublin Core (DC) Metadata. The software enabling these formats is Tamino, an XML database engine. These formats enable us to freely interchange data in real-time with other databases using XML and/or DC. More information on the Dublin Core Initiative can be found at <dublincore.org/>.

This database uses Java Server Page (JSP) together with the Tamino X-Application API to do data extraction, presentation and searching. Since these records contain Chinese, English and Japanese characters, we use Unicode (utf-8) to store and display the records. These records contain text, images and bibliographic data. Text and images records were created or prepared by library staff while bibliographic data was extracted from our online catalogue (Dragon).

The database, currently consisting of 1,175 records, is divided into these categories. Both browsing and full-text searching can be done.

Notable gifts

Dr Joanna Lee of the Department of Music has recently presented to Special Collections a set of 50 DVDs, being materials arising from her oral history project of amateur Cantonese opera players in Hong Kong, Toronto and San Francisco (《業餘習唱粵曲口述歷史》研究計劃). The set of materials is now available at the Special Collections counter under the call number HKC 784.5 Y37.

The Hong Kong Museum of Art also donated to the Libraries a complete set of 70 volumes of its publications, all well bound titles with beautiful illustrations.

Spotlight on treasures

From the Rare Book Collection
oldest western language book

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This Italian version was translated from the original Spanish edition entitled Historia de las cosas mas notables ritos y costumbres del gran dela China (The history of the remarkable rites and customs of great China) by Father Gonzalez di Mendoza (1545-1618).

A Spanish missionary, Father Gonzalez di Mendoza wrote this travel book from the accounts of several groups of Augustinian and Franciscan missionaries who went to China in the 16th century. Aside from China, this book touches on the history and culture of the Philippines, Japan and Latin America, and contains one of the earliest descriptions of the Philippines and Southeast Asia. It is also the first book printed in Europe to contain Chinese characters and observations on the nature of Chinese writing and ideography.

This publication is held in the Rare Book Collection of the Special Collections (call number U 915.1 G643a). For those who wish to deliberate on an English equivalent, read the e-Book version on the Early English Book Online (EEBO) available via the Libraries’ Key English Databases at <sunzi.lib.hku.hk/DLC/databases/keyEng.jsp>.