

# The Morrison Library

# 馬禮遜圖書館

## Preamble

Robert Morrison (1782-1834), the first Protestant missionary arrived in China in 1807, was famous for translating the Bible into Chinese and writing the first Chinese-English dictionary. To commemorate the 200th anniversary of Robert Morrison's missionary voyage to China, the HKU Libraries is pleased to present an exhibition on the history of Morrison Library. It illustrates the origins of the Morrison Library in Guangzhou, its relocation to Macao in 1839 and subsequently to Hong Kong in 1842, its transformation from a library open to westerners to a collection of books available to the public in the City Hall in 1870 and eventually to a special collection at the University of Hong Kong Libraries in 1914. Selected books and manuscripts from the present Morrison Library will also be displayed. It hopes to serve as a tribute to this long established library



Robert Morrison

## 引言

馬禮遜 (1782-1834) 於1807年來華，是第一位基督教新教傳教士來到中國傳教。他把《聖經》翻譯成中文，並為編寫第一本華英字典的學者。為紀念馬禮遜來華二百週年，香港大學圖書館現展出有關馬禮遜圖書館成立的背景、遷移、至轉贈給香港大學成為一個現代的學術圖書館的經過。希望藉此追朔這具有歷史價值的馬禮遜圖書館成立的始末。





# Background

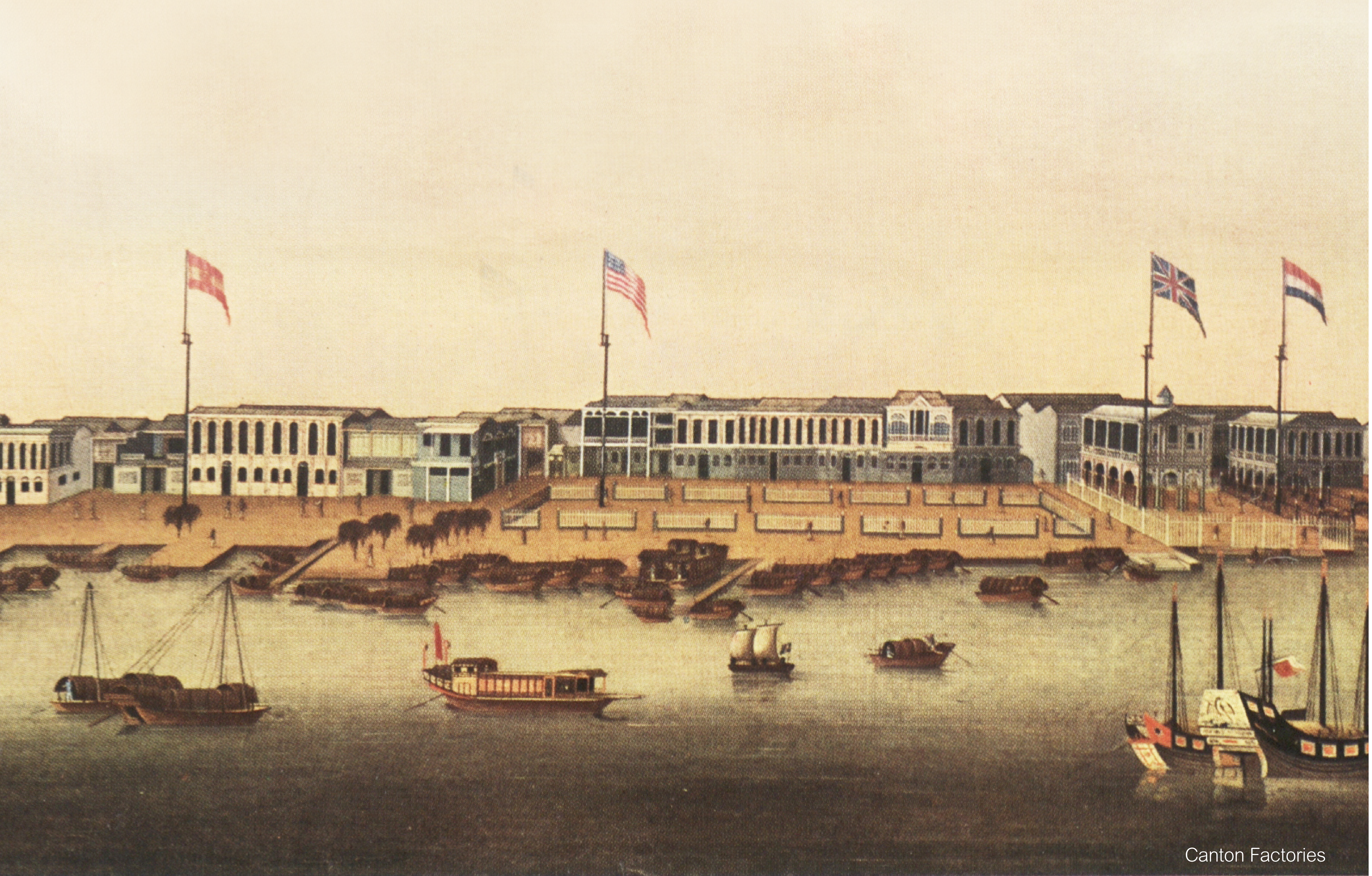
Before the Opium War, European traders in Guangzhou were pretty much confined to the ‘Thirteen Factories’ which comprised the dwellings and spaces of business of each nation under one roof. Being well educated, far from home, unoccupied for long periods, and restricted in their movements, many European traders became bookish and got into the habit of reading voluminously. They relied on reading for leisure, professional development, and current awareness. It was against such a background that a subscription library was founded by the British traders in Guangzhou.



Old and new factories, Canton

## 背景

在鴉片戰爭前，廣州西商的日常生活受到種種限制，在「十三夷館」以外沒有多少行動自由。對於這群離鄉別井的富家子弟和知識份子而言，閱讀便成為他們打發餘暇、吸收知識和掌握家鄉資訊的最佳選擇。在這個環境下，圖書館便應運而生。



Canton Factories



# The English Factory's Library

In 1806, members of the English factory, which was occupied by the East India Company, agreed to make an initial contribution, in money or in books, to the setting up of the library in addition to an annual subscription. The first librarian of the library was Dr. Alexander Pearson.

The English factory's library lasted until 1834 when the East India Company lost its monopoly of the China trade, leading to the breaking up of the English factory. Meanwhile, on 1 August 1834, the first Protestant missionary in China and the translator of the Bible into Chinese, Robert Morrison, died. A number of foreign residents in Guangzhou and Macao suggested that an institution, to be called the Morrison Education Society, should be established to carry on Morrison's work – Chinese youths should be taught to read and write the English language.

The idea of incorporating a public library into the Morrison Education Society arose when Thomas R. Colledge, also a surgeon of the East India Company wrote a letter to E.C. Bridgman of the Provisional Committee for the Morrison Education Society on 21 May 1835 that he would donate his allotted share of books from the English factory's library to the Society.

## 廣州商館圖書館

1806年，東印度公司廣州商館的成員同意成立商館的圖書館，目的是滙聚各人贊助（無論是個人藏書及金錢捐獻），並通過按年徵費，為英國僑民提供一個多樣化和高質量的藏書。而公司醫生皮爾森則出任圖書館館長。

可是，隨著東印度公司喪失對華貿易專利，廣州商館在1834年結業，它的圖書館亦無法維持下去。與此同時，馬禮遜於1834年8月1日去世。為希望延續馬禮遜在華的教育工作，一些廣州及澳門的西方僑民建議成立馬禮遜教育會。

1835年5月21日，前東印度公司的另一位公司醫生郭雷樞寫了一封信給馬禮遜教育會臨時委員會的通訊秘書裨治文，內容大意是圖書館各成員對將所有書籍贈送給馬禮遜教育會的建議，未能達至共識，最後決定成員瓜分書籍，他個人則樂意將分配給他的書籍送給教育會。





# The Morrison Library

The Morrison Education Society was founded in Guangzhou on 28 September 1836. The Library of the Morrison Education Society (the Morrison Library), located at Lungshung or Old English Factory, was opened to European residents in early 1838. John R. Morrison (Robert Morrison's son) was the librarian.

## 馬禮遜圖書館的成立

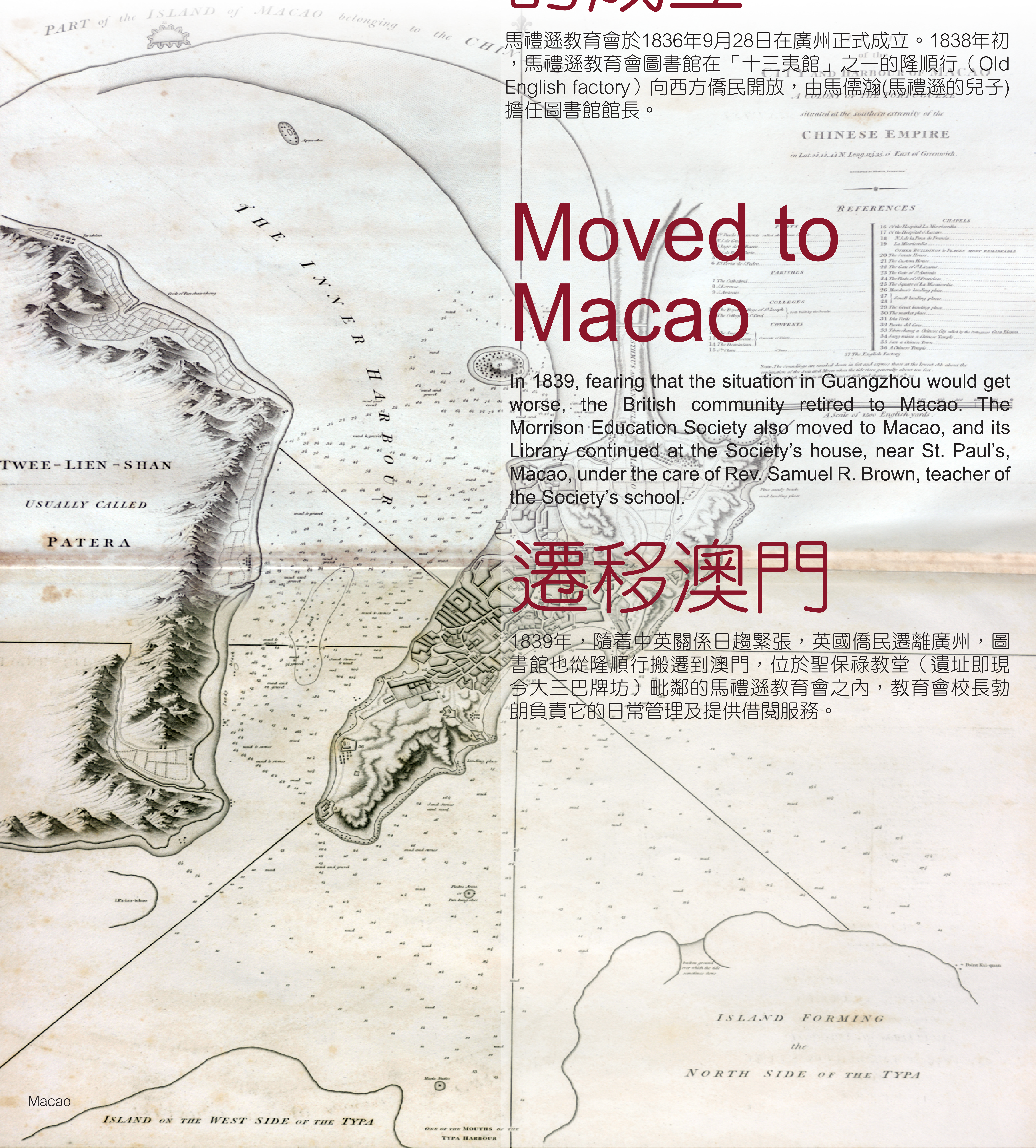
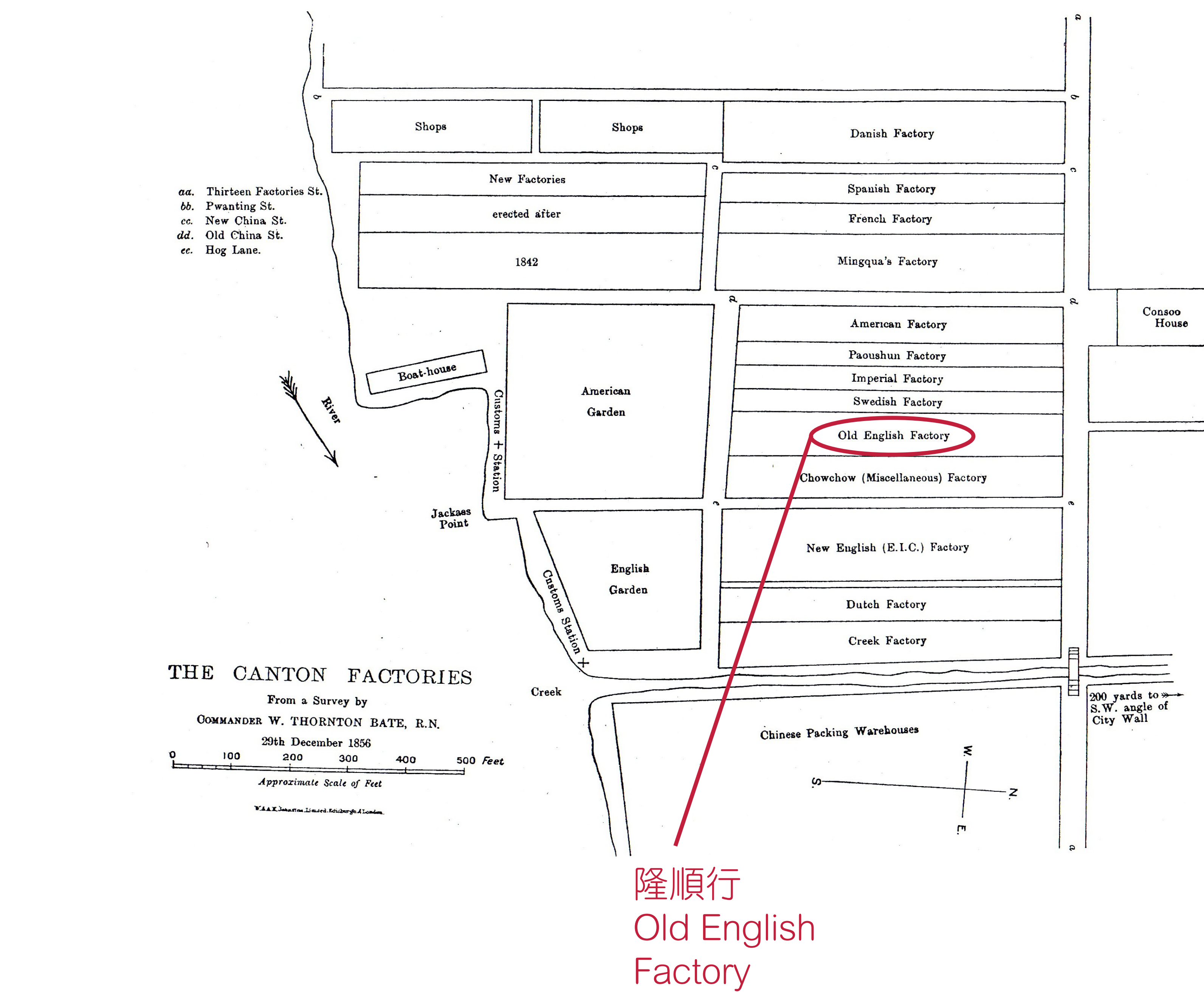
馬禮遜教育會於1836年9月28日在廣州正式成立。1838年初，馬禮遜教育會圖書館在「十三夷館」之一的隆順行（Old English factory）向西方僑民開放，由馬儒瀚（馬禮遜的兒子）擔任圖書館館長。

## Moved to Macao

In 1839, fearing that the situation in Guangzhou would get worse, the British community retired to Macao. The Morrison Education Society also moved to Macao, and its Library continued at the Society's house, near St. Paul's, Macao, under the care of Rev. Samuel R. Brown, teacher of the Society's school.

## 遷移澳門

1839年，隨着中英關係日趨緊張，英國僑民遷離廣州，圖書館也從隆順行搬遷到澳門，位於聖保祿教堂（遺址即現今大三巴牌坊）毗鄰的馬禮遜教育會之內，教育會校長勃朗負責它的日常管理及提供借閱服務。

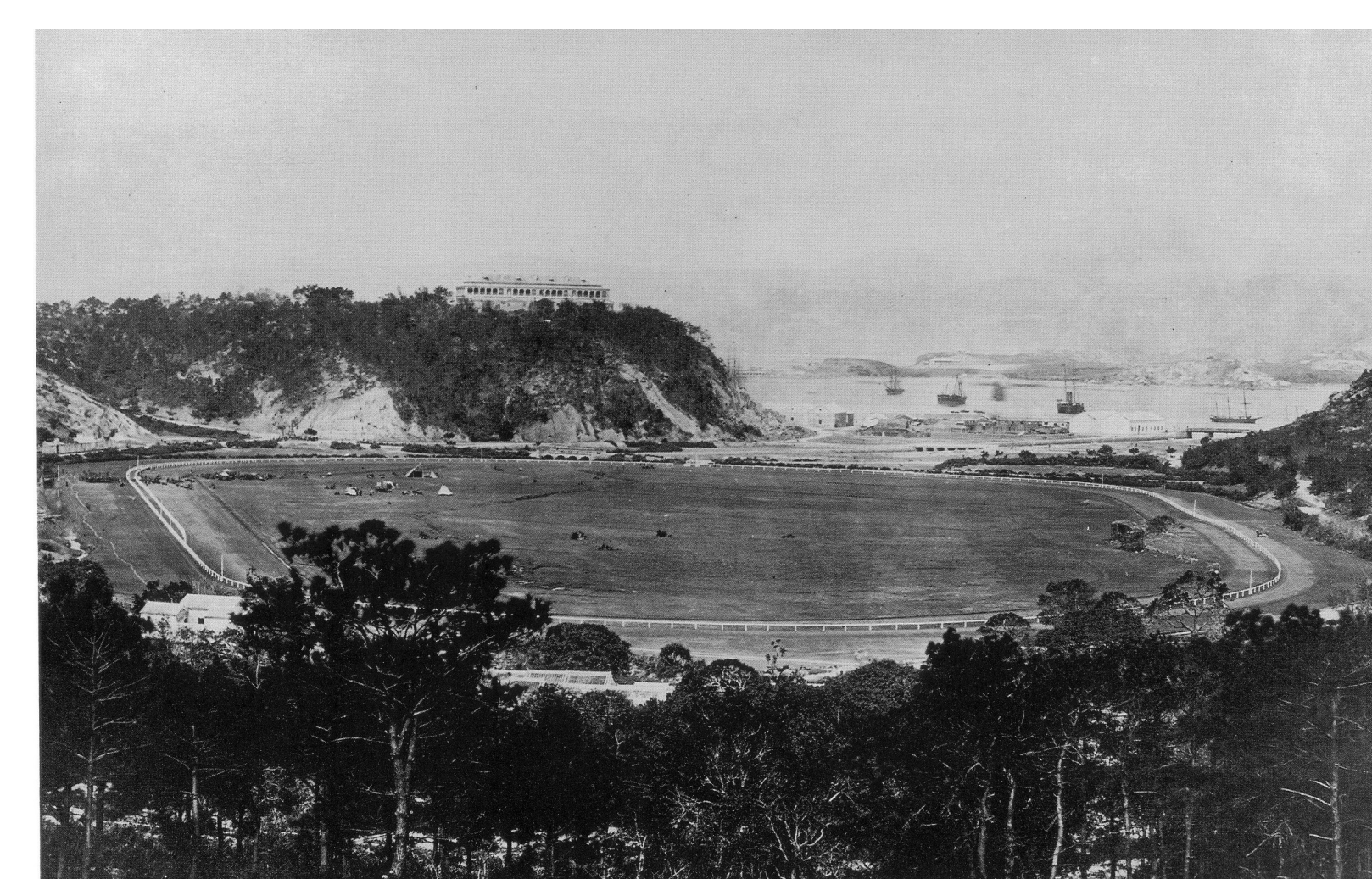




# Relocated to Hong Kong

In 1842, Henry Pottinger, the first Governor of Hong Kong, granted a piece of land on what is today Morrison Hill in Hong Kong to the Morrison Education Society for constructing dwelling house and school-room. A room in the west wing of the building, measuring 21 by 25 feet in dimensions was assigned to the Library.

The Society ran into financial difficulties in the late 1840s. The Morrison Library was relocated several times between 1848 and 1858: it was relocated to a 'more central position' (its exact location cannot be traced) in 1848 to improve its accessibility; the Library was deposited in a room in the Court House in 1855; the Library was moved from the Court House to the old Morrison premises in 1857; and the Library was stored at the London Mission Printing Office in 1858 and was not open to members.



Morrison Hill



Old Court House

## 遷往香港

1842年，馬禮遜教育會得香港首任總督砵甸乍撥地，在馬禮遜山（即今日摩利臣山）興建會址，圖書館獲分配大樓西翼一個「21呎乘以25呎」的房間。

教育會於1840年代後期陷入財政困難，而圖書館於1848年至1858年間數度搬遷。據馬禮遜教育會1848年年報，圖書館搬遷到一個「更中央的地點」，讓讀者可以容易使用。但是，這個地方在哪裏，現今已不可考。1855年，圖書館再轉遷到位於高等法院的一個房間。1857年，它由高等法院遷回馬禮遜山舊址。1858年，教育會將藏書存放在英華書院，不向讀者開放。

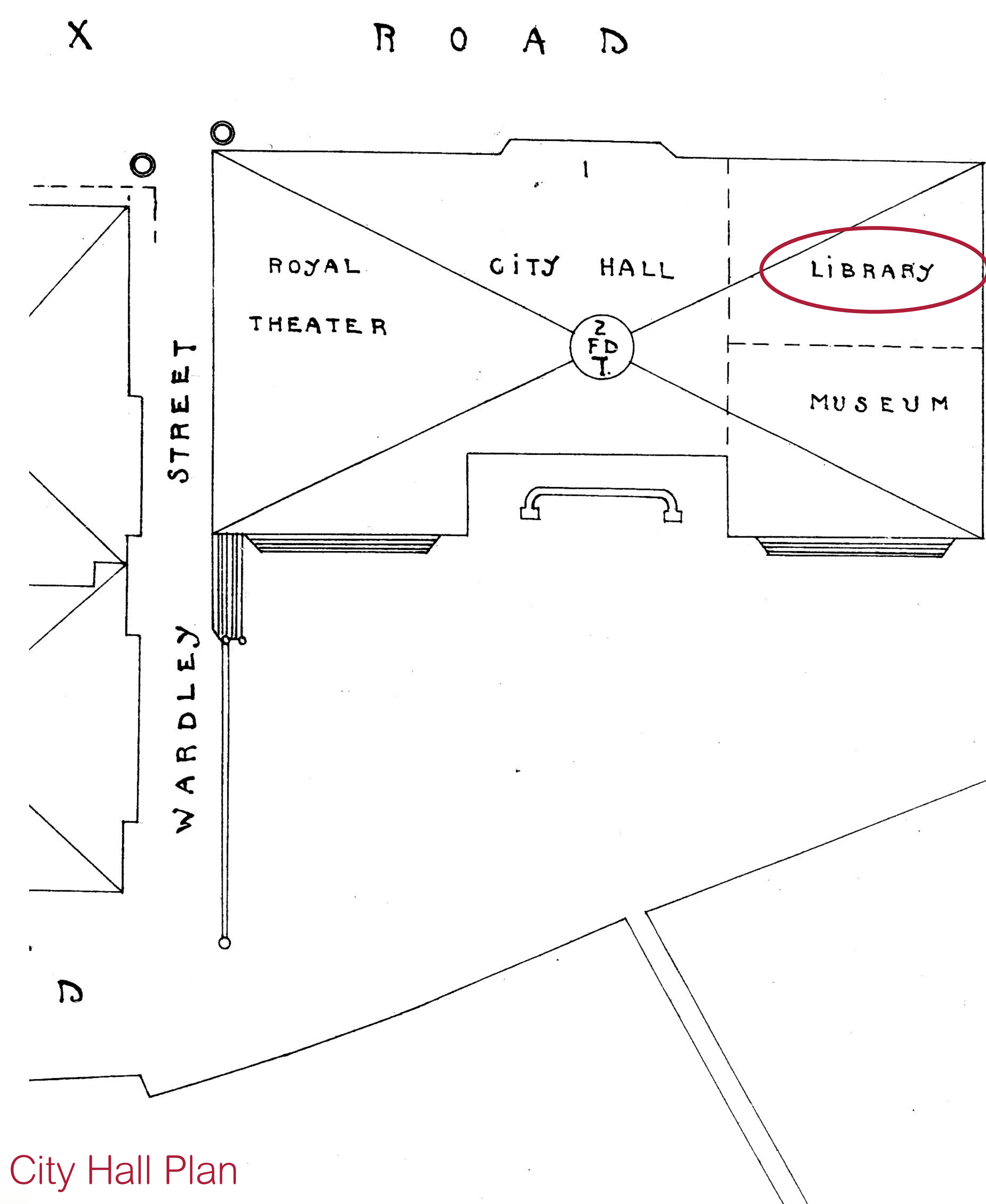


Morrison Hill



# The Library as a public library in the City Hall

In 1863, the Provisional Committee of the City Hall suggested that a suitable room in the proposed City Hall building would be assigned to house the valuable collections of the Morrison Library. In 1867, the Morrison Education Society lost its funds in the bankruptcy of Dent & Co., whose owners, including Lancelot Dent and John Dent, had been prominent supporters of the Society since the early days in Guangzhou. And the Morrison Library was eventually handed over to the newly established City Hall in 1869 to make a new milestone. The collection of the Morrison Library was a free gift for the use of the public, the books be kept distinct from all other collections in the City Hall, and designated 'the Morrison Library' in perpetuation of the great missionary's memory.



## 移交 香港大會堂 公共圖書館

1863年，大會堂臨時委員會向政府建議，為馬禮遜圖書館在籌建中的大會堂預留地方，作為館址。1867年，由教育會前主席及資深會員，顛地經營之顛地洋行宣告破產，教育會存放在該行的基金，遭受嚴重損失，令教育會的財政受到沉重的打擊。1869年，大會堂落成，大會堂臨時委員會接收馬禮遜圖書館，該館的管理運作，開始一個新的里程。大會堂委員會又遵從教育會的要求，將贈書命名為馬禮遜圖書館，與大會堂圖書館其他藏書分開存放，永留記念。





# A Home at the University of Hong Kong

In the early 1910s, books of Morrison Library became little used and that the City Hall Library was suffering from shortage of space owing to the growth of other collections. Eventually, the City Hall Committee agreed in March 1914 to transfer the Morrison Library to the University of Hong Kong on one condition that the Library should be unconditionally returned to the City Hall upon demand of the Committee.

The University of Hong Kong did not own the Morrison Library until 22 August 1925 when the City Hall Committee definitely and permanently renounced the right to demand the return. The Morrison Library, now commonly called the Morrison Collection, has been part of the University of Hong Kong Libraries collection since that time.



The University of Hong Kong West Library, 1918

## 以香港大學為家

到了二十世紀初，馬禮遜圖書館似已不受大會堂委員會重視。與此同時，大會堂圖書館受惠於各界贈書，藏書日見增加，導致館舍不敷應用。為了解決館舍空間不足問題，大會堂委員會最終在1914年3月，將馬禮遜圖書館轉交給當時新成立的香港大學。大會堂委員會將馬禮遜圖書館移交香港大學初年，仍然保持書籍的擁有權。直至1925年8月22日，大會堂委員會終於明確表示，永久放棄要求香港大學歸還書籍。

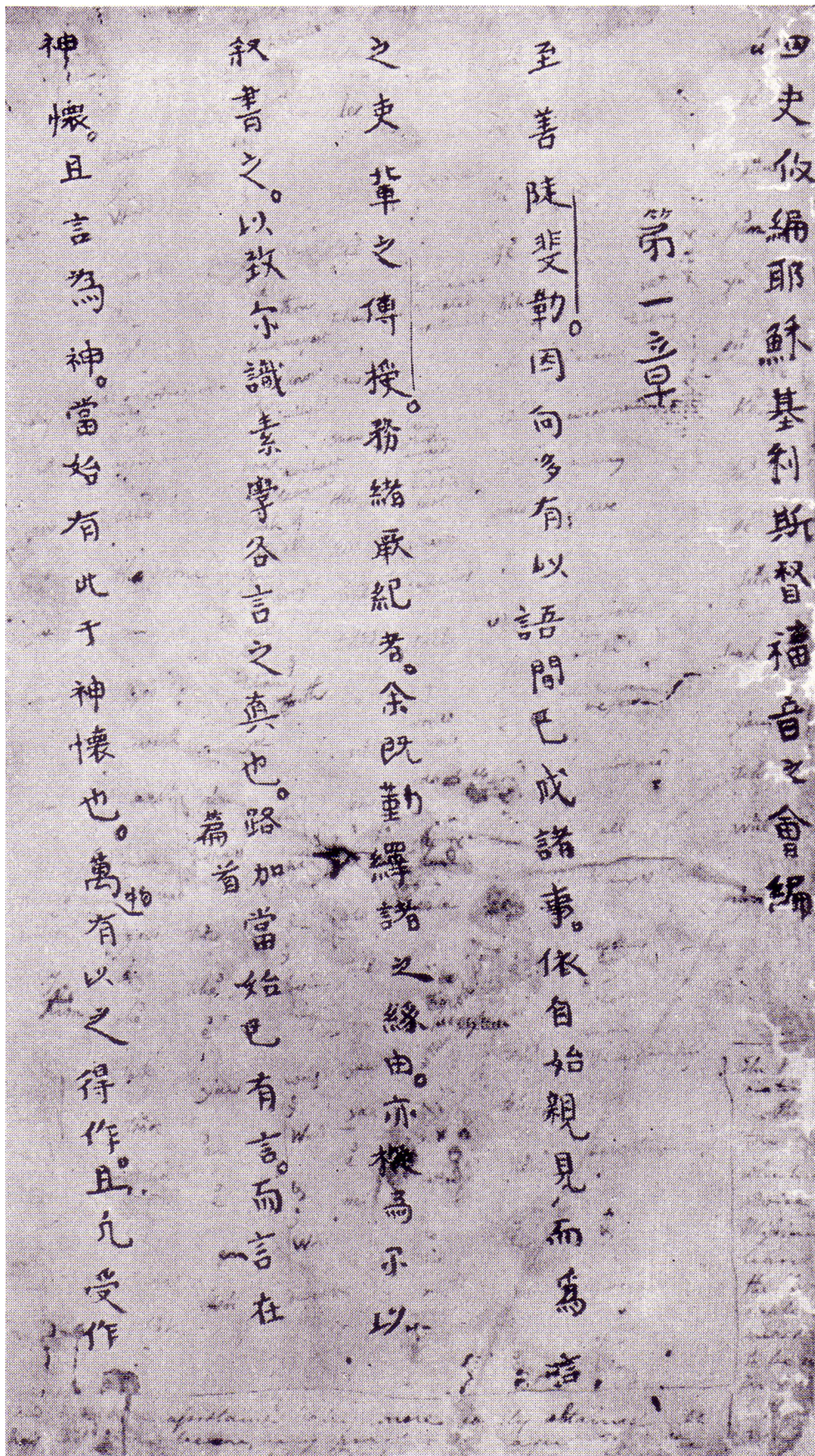


The University of Hong Kong 1912

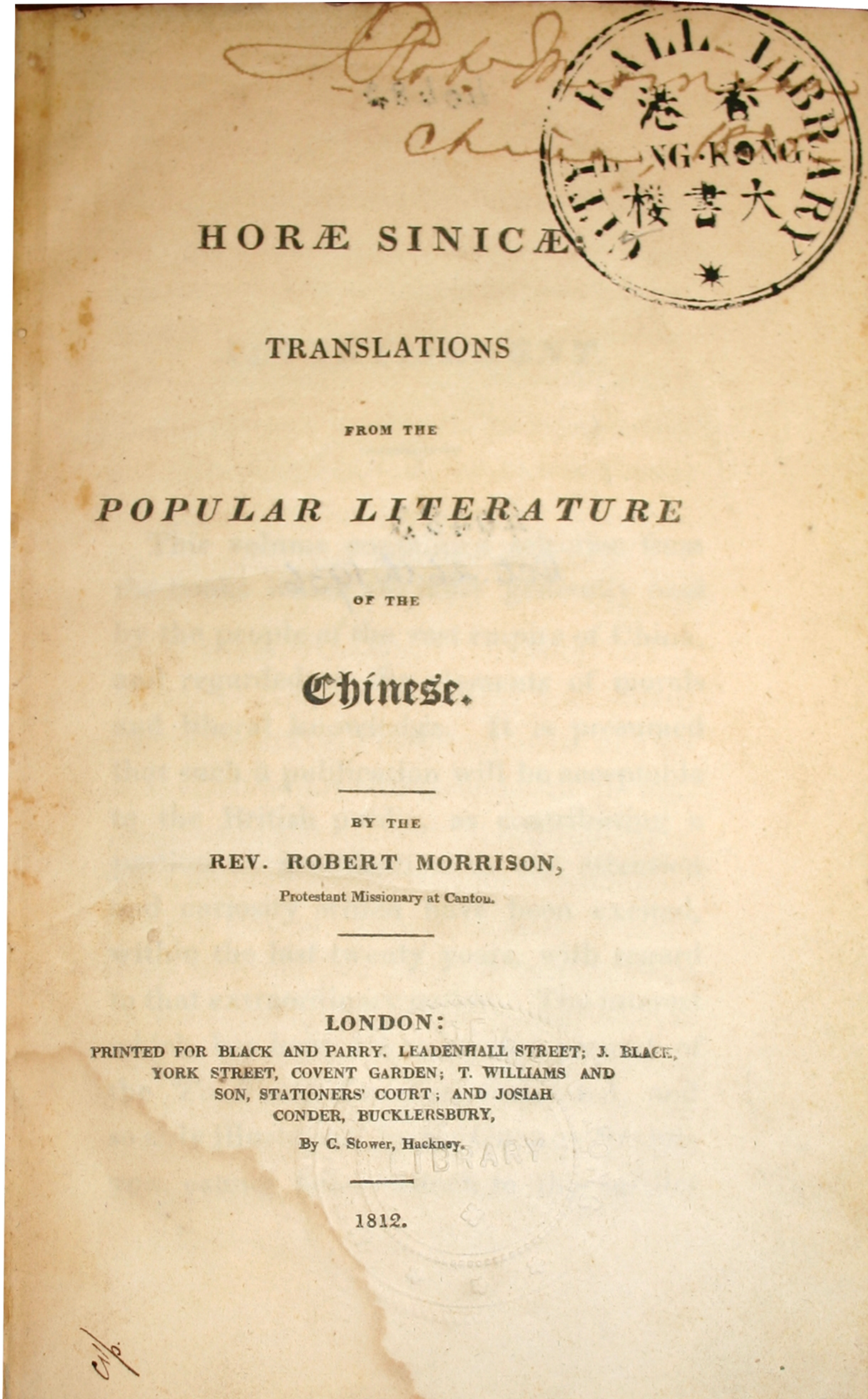




The Western Rare Book Room



Manuscript of Chinese Bible



A book with Robert Morrison's signature and a City Hall's stamp

# The Present Morrison Library

The University of Hong Kong Libraries conducted the first stocktaking of the Morrison Collection in 1956 and it was reported that of the 1,666 titles (3,585 volumes) that were available in 1873, only 1,233 (2,748 volumes) were found. Some volumes were removed from the Collection when Hong Kong was occupied by the Japanese during the Second World War and were not subsequently recovered. Another stocktaking exercise has just been completed and the Collection now consists of 1,284 titles, in 2,752 volumes; all titles have been catalogued and can be retrieved from the Libraries' online catalogue.

The Library still contains a number of books that bear Robert Morrison's signature and City Hall's stamp, and a unique manuscript of a Chinese translation of the Bible, which had been brought by Robert Morrison to China to help translate his own version. As a whole, the library has a few seventeenth century books, such as *Novus Atlas Sinensis* (1655) by Martino Martini and *China Monumentis* (1667) by Athanasius Kircher, and a fair number of eighteenth century titles and the remaining published in the nineteenth century.

At present, the Morrison Collection is kept in the 24-hour air-conditioned Western Rare Book Room at Special Collections, 1/F Main Library of the University of Hong Kong Libraries.

## 現今的馬禮遜圖書館

1956年，香港大學圖書館為馬禮遜圖書館進行第一次查對藏書。扣除了已遺失書籍和無可修補的爛書後，館藏餘下2,748冊。最近，圖書館進行了另一次查對藏書，並為所有書籍重新編目，讓讀者可以在網上檢索目錄。據最新統計，馬禮遜圖書館共有藏書 1,284種，共 2,752冊。

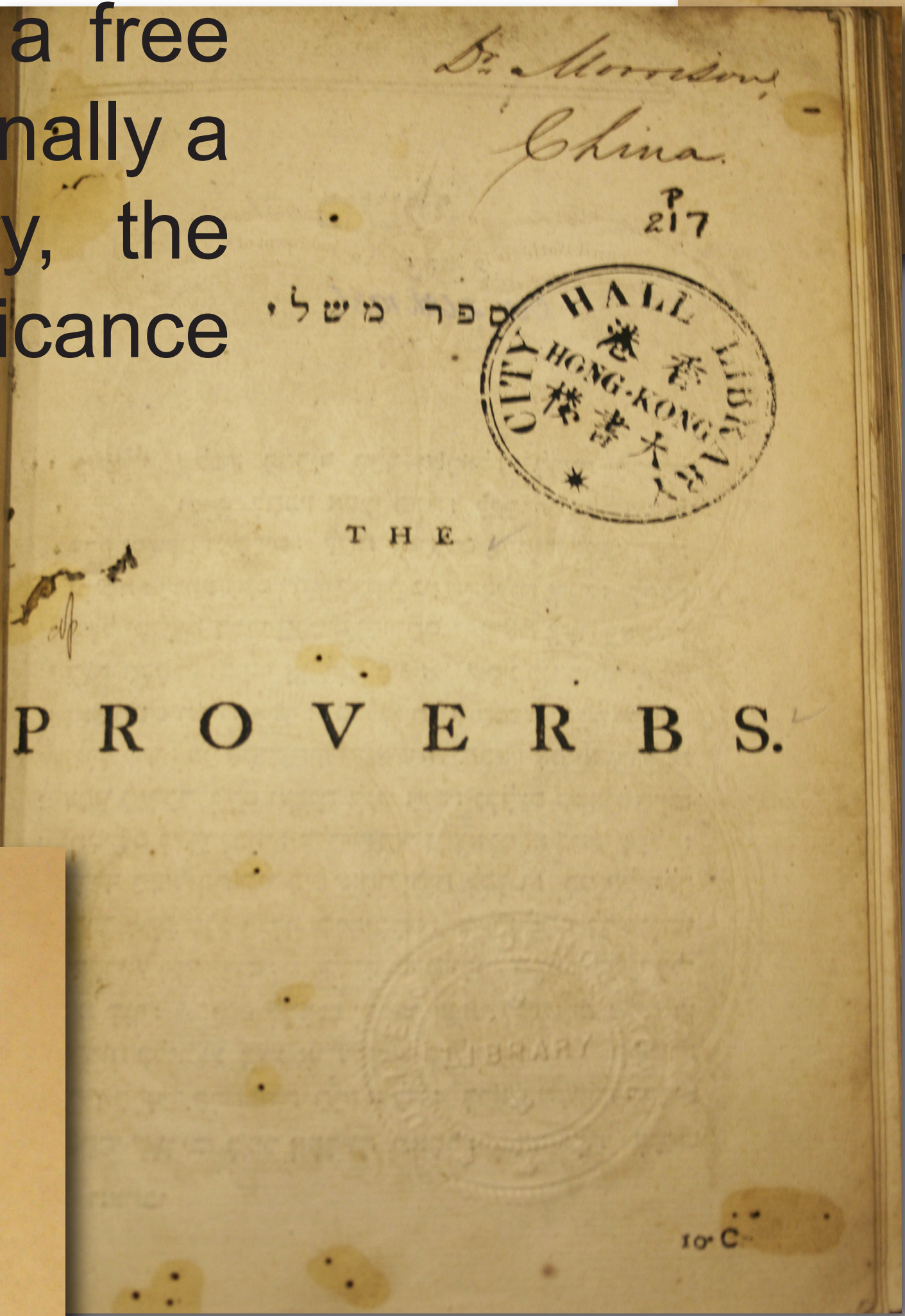
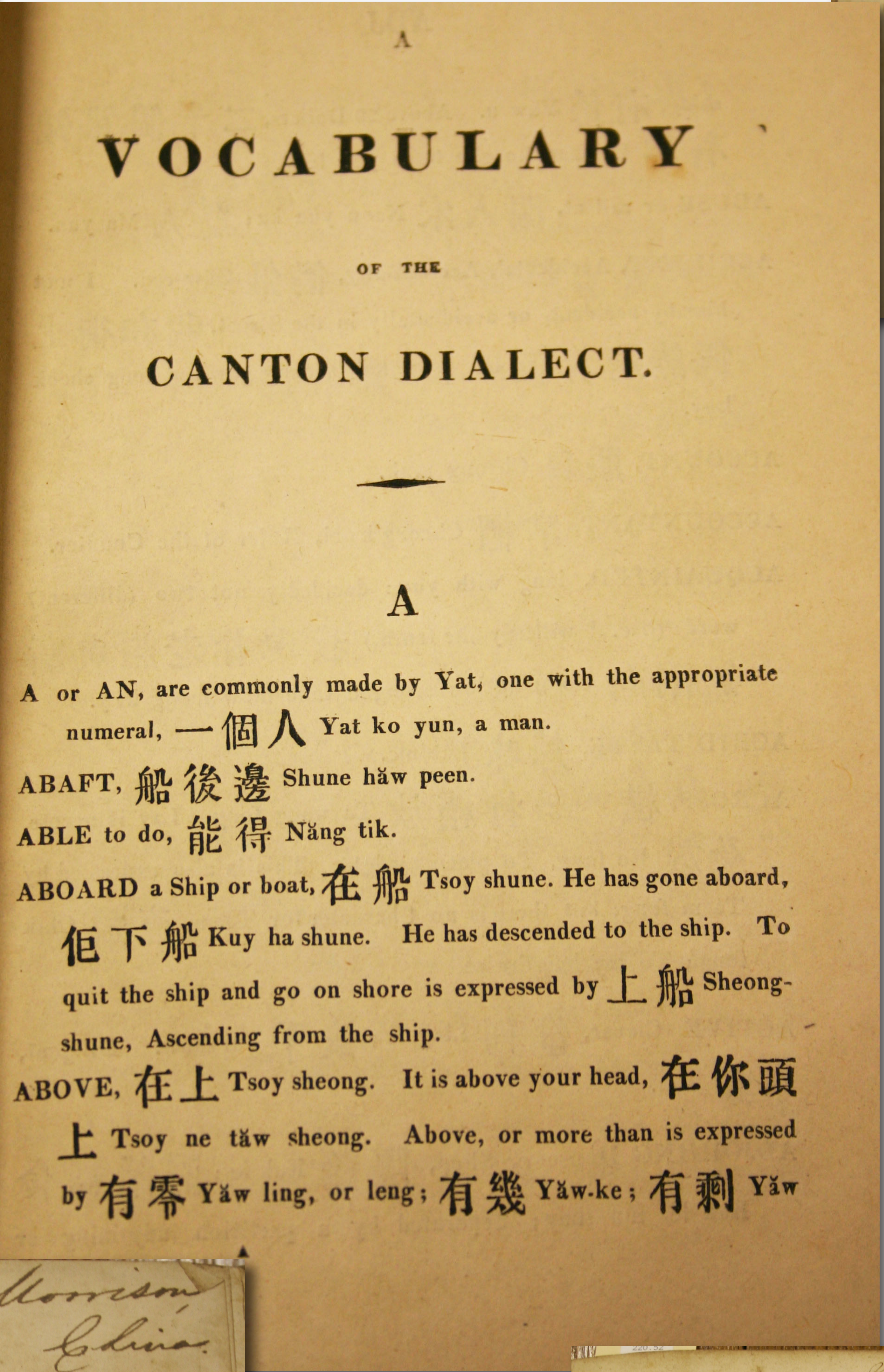
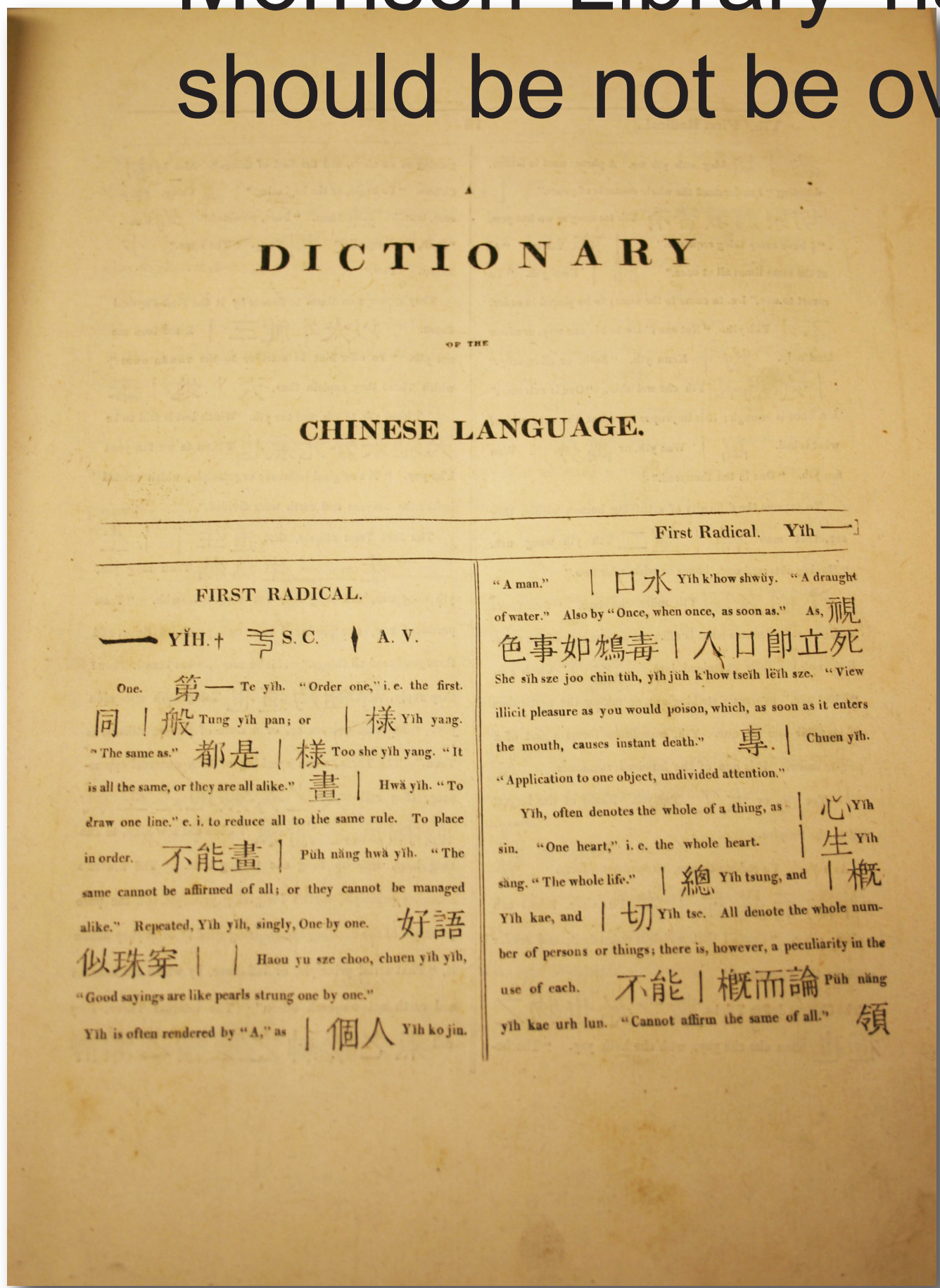
現今的馬禮遜圖書館館藏當中，不乏珍本。當中最珍貴的，要算是「四史攸編耶穌基利斯督福音之會編」手抄本，是馬禮遜從英國帶到中國，用作翻譯聖經之用，相信它的價值已遠遠超越一份手稿或一本珍本書，恐怕是一件獨一無二的歷史文物了。而藏書中仍可在一些書籍的書名頁找到馬禮遜的簽名。另還有若干十七世紀版本，衛匡國 (Martino Martini) 的「新中國地圖」(*Novus Atlas Sinensis*) (1655年) 和契爾學 (Athanasius Kircher) 的「中國圖志」(*China Monumentis*) (1667年)，更是不可多得。整個館藏以十八和十九世紀出版書刊為主。

隨着科技發展及生活水準提高，馬禮遜圖書館的儲存環境在近數十年間日有改善。今天的館址，位於香港大學圖書館新翼大樓一樓特藏部的西文珍本書室，設有24小時空氣調節以確保穩定的溫度和濕度，為保存珍貴書籍而設計的消防系統，及現代化的保安設備。



# An Unforgettable Treasure

Morrison Library has a long history, extensively it traveled, from Guangzhou to Macao, and then to Hong Kong, which provides a good example of the close cultural relationship between the three places. Within Hong Kong, the Library was relocated several times until it settled in its present home at the University of Hong Kong Libraries. Initially for the exclusive use of its members and for those who could afford to pay for the privilege, subsequently part of a free library serving mainly the European community, and finally a valued research collection in an academic library, the Morrison Library has a unique history and its significance should be not be overlooked.



## 文化遺產

總括來說，馬禮遜圖書館有一段獨特悠久的歷史。以館址來說，它曾分別立足於廣州、澳門和香港，是三地一衣帶水、文化同源的有力證據。從1838年到現在，馬禮遜圖書館經歷了風風雨雨，從一個十九世紀只供西方僑民使用的收費圖書館，至被大會堂接管後，成為一所免費的、向所有香港市民開放的公共圖書館，到演變成為一個現代的學術圖書館，它曾作出的貢獻，在歷史裏是不可磨滅的。

