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Preservation of and Access to the Maurice Durand Han Nom Collection at Yale University in the United States: A Fieldwork Evaluation Report

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Abstract

The wealth of Han Nom collections scattered in national, academic, and private libraries as well as research institutes and archives in different parts of the world provides invaluable learning, teaching, and research opportunities for the present and future generations of Han Nom scholars. This paper aims to report on the fieldwork evaluation of preserving the Maurice Durand Han Nom Collection and providing access to the collection at Yale University in the United States.

Yale University Library acquired the private collection of the late Professor Maurice Durand (1914-1966) in 1967. The entire collection is not cataloged but available for onsite research at Yale. The subject of the collection deals with East Asia but also includes Indochina. As per the previous research inventory notes of Professor George Dutton from the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of California, Los Angeles, the scope of the collection covers manuscripts and typescripts of Professor Durand 's monographs, articles, and reviews almost exclusively in French. Included also are Han manuscripts of dynastic chronicles by Vietnamese scholars. The collection contains microfilm of Han texts by Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient in the early 1950s. They are primarily published texts in romanized Vietnamese of the early 20th century and a small collection of Han Nom texts. In addition, the collection consists of Professor Durand 's academic notes on various projects and writings on topics including literature, culture, and history; notebooks of Han/Nom texts with handwritten transliteration without translations or annotations; and a few hundred of black and white annotated ethnographic photographs that Professor Durand took in Hong Kong and the New Territories in the mid-1950s.

Subject to funding support, recommendations would be made after an onsite evaluation to create an online finding aid to the Durand Collection for public access under Yale University Library homepage. As for the long term preservation of and access to the Durand collection, it would be optimum to create a full-text virtual collection and provide convenient free access to scholars worldwide for engaging in online discussions, collaborative transliteration and translation projects or any textual comparative study as the first of its kind Han Nom digital collection in the United States.

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