

Tracing the Books Purchased by Yang Shoujing in Japan: Holdings in the Collection of the National Central Library

Hsu, Yuan-ting
Department of Rare Books and Documents
National Palace Museum

Abstract

In Taiwan, the study of books acquired by the late Qing bibliophile Yang Shoujing has not only provided a general overview of his contributions to book collecting overall, but also mainly focused on investigating his books that made their way into the current holdings of the National Palace Museum. However, relatively little discussion involved his books that ended up in other library collections. Although scholars earlier studied twenty or so books collected by Yang Shoujing now in the National Central Library, a reexamination by the author has discovered that there are actually at least 47 of his books there. Excluding the books that he wrote about or inscribed and the ones that did not officially enter his collection, there are still 36 books that were once in Yang's possession, and 86 percent of them (31 titles) were acquired by him in Japan. Since Yang Shoujing had sold these books to other bibliophiles while still alive, the trajectory of their circulation followed different routes, finally ending with the National Central Library. The present study provides a complete review of the books from Yang Shoujing now in the National Central Library and examines the route they took before entering its collection. In the process, it has even been discovered that Yang had "multiple copies of the same book," a previously little-known phenomenon with regard to his collection.

Keywords: Yang Shoujing, National Central Library, book collecting in Japan, collection sources, late Qing bibliophiles

(Translated by Donald E. Brix)