

Honorary Librarian's Report for the Year 2020/21

RASHK Library Collection

The year 2020 has seen unprecedented disruption to our daily life due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact is still being felt across our communities at the time of writing. Our library service for members has also been heavily affected. Due to extended periods of temporary suspension of public library services; observance of government recommendation to stay at home as well as a near-complete standstill in international travel to curb the transmission of the virus, the RASHK library has seen a record drop in the consultation of our materials and other library related activity in the past year.

As of 28 February 2021, the library collection has reached 8,572 volumes, inclusive of merely 18 new items added to the collection in the reporting year. Whilst donations of books have been steady, their processing has been severely delayed owing to temporary office closure and work from home arrangements. Donations of books were received from Mr Mark O'Neill, Mr Mark Clifford, Mr Nicholas Kitto, Mr Francis Wann, Mr William Meacham and Dr Helen Tinsley. Donations of journals were received from the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, the Siam Society, Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, Taipei, The Institute for Research in Humanities at Kyoto University and Cambridge University Press.

Usage of RASHK Library Collection

The number of reference enquiries and library books consulted had dropped over 50% with minimal change in the number of borrowers and loans. This reveals that there had been little activity in terms of visits and circulation of books. As reported by the Hong Kong Central Library, the usage of our library collection for the current reporting year against the last is as follows:

<u>Library Usage</u>	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>
No. of reference enquiries	67	25
No. of books consulted	101	28
No. of borrowers	75	69
No. of books loaned out	106	102

There was no request received to access the Carl Smith Collection which is the first time since records began in 2007.

JSTOR Digital Library

Fortunately, not all is doom and gloom. Online usage tracked against the RASHK Journal on the JSTOR platform had seen a huge increase in 2020. JSTOR is a well-established online platform providing digital access to over 10 million academic journal articles. Since 2014, full text of the RASHK Journal has been made searchable and accessible worldwide under a pay-to-download/view arrangement with JSTOR.

There were 39,133 article requests of the RASHK Journal in 2020/2021 on JSTOR, representing an impressive 59% increase in usage compared to 2019/2020 figures. I am pleased to report that this increase has more than doubled the increase in the previous year which aptly illustrates the popularity of our Journal and the switch to online activity. The revenue generated under our collaboration with JSTOR in 2020 was USD 2,634.81 (after tax), showing a 7% year-on-year increase.

Finally

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the team at the Hong Kong Central Library during this challenging time for their professional service and operational support. In the face of unpredictability, their responsiveness to constant changes has been most remarkable. I am hopeful that the library activity will pick up as we progress into 2021 and 2022.

Vivian So
Hon. Librarian
April 2021