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**A New Starr in Berkeley's Firmament:  
The Dedication of the C. V. Starr East Asian Library and  
the Chang-Lin Tien Center for East Asian Studies**

**Opening of the C. V. Starr East Asian Library  
University of California, Berkeley  
October 17, 2007  
Berkeley, California**

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As you may know, I received my doctorate—a few years ago, now—from Stanford University, fierce rival of Berkeley at Big Game every fall. And I spent almost 10 years as dean at the University of California, Los Angeles, which has chafed at being considered this campus's "Southern Branch" since its founding in 1919. So why am I here? There are extremely compelling reasons for me to resist participating in the dedication of yet another splendid building on this already impossibly beautiful campus with every fiber of my being. And yet, to the contrary, I am both pleased and honored to take part in this morning's program along with my distinguished colleagues.

We're here, after all, to celebrate something whose significance transcends even the noblest of petty rivalries, a true milestone in the academic world: the construction of the first freestanding East Asian library in North America. It will also house the Chang-Lin Tien Center for East Asian Studies, named for Chancellor Tien, who was so devoted to his engineering lab he often made it—and not his home—his first stop after returning to Berkeley from a trip.

This morning we inaugurate a great laboratory for the humanities and social sciences. It is one whose riches I had the privilege of mining several years ago thanks to the hospitality of its librarian, the late Donald Shively, and the bureaucratic wizardry of Joyce Ford at the privileges desk, who succeeded in turning the rhetoric that this is "one university system" into a reality.

And I have no doubt that its new prominence will reward countless other intellectual adventures for years to come.

It is also an honor to be at the intersection of the several international scholarly networks gathered in Berkeley this weekend. The tableau offered by the series of meetings and conferences that will take place over the next few days convincingly underscores the rich dynamism of the world university today. I use the phrase *world university* in several senses. By every measure, the University of California is one of the world's leading universities, renowned for its excellence and drawing students and faculty from around the globe. The personal history of Chang-Lin Tien is but one particularly triumphant chapter in the narrative of the University of California as a world university. The University of California, Berkeley is also a world university because of what it takes as its subject. It is an institution with a deep, sustained, and powerful commitment to studying and teaching the world, in all of its cultural complexities, historical nuances, and natural variety. And in the meetings that surround this morning's ceremony, we can see the University of California, Berkeley as one site of *the* world university. Today, knowledge-creating institutions are knitting together networks of information, research, and scholarship into a spectacularly promising fabric that will one day burnish away impediments of both physical remoteness and, even more importantly, intellectual distance. This is, indeed, an occasion worth celebrating.

My organization, the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), works to advance humanistic studies. It has long maintained a special interest in East Asia, benefiting greatly from the labors of countless faculty members from Berkeley over the years (yet another reason for me to happily join with you today). The late Frederic Wakeman Jr., professor of Chinese history and past director of the Institute of East Asian Studies, played an especially important role here at ACLS as well as at its sister organization, the Social Science Research Council, developing local, national, and international structures for research and training on China. I'm pleased that both Berkeley and ACLS wished to pay tribute to Fred's legacy by establishing graduate and postdoctoral funds in his name, and I stand here to affirm our shared commitment.

But I also had two very personal reasons for accepting University Librarian Tom Leonard's invitation to help inaugurate both the C. V. Starr Library and the Chang-Lin Tien East Asian Studies Center. The first has to do with my father, a cardiologist who spent his entire career on the faculty of the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry and was dubbed "the man with the golden stethoscope" at Strong Memorial Hospital. While he was still teaching, a

scholarship established in his name was seeded by a grant from the Starr Foundation, and after his passing, when the U of R decided to establish the Paul N. Yu Heart Center for inpatient and outpatient cardiovascular care, a lead gift toward its funding also came from Starr. My family remains profoundly grateful to the foundation and to the philanthropic legacy of Cornelius Vander Starr, whose generosity we celebrate today.

The second reason has to do with me, for it was Chancellor Tien who brought me to the University of California in 1989. You probably know that the only two years he was ever enticed away from Berkeley were those he spent as executive vice chancellor at University of California, Irvine, from 1988 to 1990. That first year he fast-tracked plans for the creation of a new Department of East Asian Languages and Literature, something—quite amazingly—that did not yet exist on a campus whose undergraduate student body was already 35% Asian American. I was then teaching at Columbia (where the East Asian library is also named after C. V. Starr!), in one of the most venerable East Asian programs in the country, but was sufficiently intrigued by Irvine's stated commitment to this new unit to consider moving west to become its founding chair.

My campus visits were marvels of recruitment. Distinguished colleagues from all the European literature departments showed up at my lecture to affirm their interest in topics outside their usual orbit. My three children were also flown out from New York so that we could all spend a day at Disneyland. Certainly, as far as they were concerned, the deal was done. But Executive Vice Chancellor Tien's busy schedule had unfortunately required him to be away during my visits, and I needed to talk to him before signing on the dotted line.

Shortly after my return to New York I was told that he would be on the East Coast for a meeting and could make himself available for an afternoon. Would it be possible for him to visit me at home? The next day he rented a car and drove from Washington, DC, to my apartment in New York, where, over a beer, we spent several hours discussing his aspirations for the department and the resources he would commit to faculty positions, the library, language teaching, a new graduate program, and research. Then he headed back to DC, braving the formidable rush-hour traffic. It was not long thereafter that I accepted the position.

As amazed and impressed as I was that he would go to such lengths just to hire a department chair, I'm sure this story does not surprise those of you who knew Chang-Lin Tien. It was

difficult to resist someone of such boundless vision, energy, and determination. Much to my dismay, of course, within 18 months of my arrival at UCI he was “called back” to Berkeley to become its chancellor, but I certainly have no regrets that he persuaded me to come to California; it was my very good fortune to be able to share a campus with him, even for that brief time.

Chang-Lin Tien was a scientist, but he knew that any university deserving of the name needed to be strong across the disciplinary spectrum—not just in the sciences, but equally so in the humanities and social sciences. He was a Californian who knew that knowledge about the world, deeply humanistic knowledge, should stand at the core, and not the periphery, of an education. It is, I think, most fitting that an East Asian studies center that bears his name has been built in the center of this campus.

As chancellor of UC Berkeley, Professor Tien occupied one of the most visible and influential posts in American higher education, and his record does great credit to the cumulative legacy of that position. Among his illustrious predecessors and successors in that role are two names that by any reckoning are among the five or ten most important in the history of the American university. One of those, of course, was Clark Kerr. Kerr, chancellor from 1952 to 1958 and university president from 1958 to 1967, not only set the framework for higher education in all of California but his lectures, collected in 1963 under the title *The Uses of the University*, helped the mid-twentieth-century American university reimagine itself as the “multiversity,” serving both the advancement of knowledge and society with new vigor and flexibility.

An earlier predecessor, Daniel Coit Gilman, had helped shape the American university in the nineteenth century just as Clark Kerr helped rebuild and reinterpret it in the twentieth. Gilman was the University of California’s first president; he served only briefly, from 1872 to 1874. He is probably better known for building the new Johns Hopkins University as the Americanized instantiation of the then all-powerful German university. But the ideals that he realized in Baltimore were first forged here in California.

At his inauguration as the president of the University of California in 1872, Gilman delivered an address entitled “The Building of a University.”<sup>1</sup> There is much that is quaint, even antique, in the speech, but I find it striking that 135 years ago, President Gilman identified three dynamics that

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<sup>1</sup> Gilman, Daniel C. “The Building of the University, and Inaugural Address.” U of Calif., Berkeley, Oakland, Calif. 7 Nov. 1872. Address. <<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/CalHistory/inaugural.gilman.html>>

have powered the University's ascendancy and continue to shape the particular project that we ceremonially launch today.

First, Gilman asserted, there were emerging models and converging standards for university education, and there was a national and even worldwide contest to develop those models. Individual institutions were not isolated cities on distant hills but part of an interrelated system in which universities improved through emulation and competition.

"During the last few years great changes have been made in the higher educational system of this and other lands," the new president noted. "Everywhere among enlightened people, universities in their most comprehensive scope are...receiving impulses which are as credible to the spirit of the age as they are hopeful for the ages yet to come." The challenge for California, he proposed, was to join that system. "In the [r]ace for the encouragement of knowledge and education for the young," he declared, "the Occident must not be distanced." By "Occident," I should note, Gilman meant the western United States, but the same dynamic applies today as policy makers worry that the United States is falling behind Asia in "competitiveness."

Gilman's second principle was a corollary of the first. If the university movement converging toward a new mechanism of knowledge production was worldwide, its openness to new talent must equal in breadth the range of its research interests. In this regard, Gilman found this state very well positioned. California, he said, was "a community more varied than almost any in the land...whose central city is cosmopolite like Constantinople of old." In an era when religious prejudice and sectarian suspicion were far from unacceptable, Gilman chose instead to affirm California's religious and ethnic diversity, in which "the traces of the Spanish pioneers who brought to these shores...the emblematic keys of the Roman pontiff" coexisted with Protestant denominations of all types and many "who look for a Messiah yet to come; ...[while] crowding into these harbors [we] behold the children of Confucius and the worshipers of the unknown gods." The new university, he maintained, must be open to all.

Third, Gilman foresaw the University of California as a distinctively Pacific Rim institution. "California is not only granary, treasury, and mart for the American States which are growing up on this long coast," he emphasized, "but it is the portal through which the Occident and Orient must exchange their products and *their thoughts*" [emphasis added]. Gilman applauded the fact that the University's first endowed professorial chair was the Agassiz Professorship of Oriental

Languages and Literatures, presented by Edward Tompkins in 1872. While it would be another 24 years before the founding of the department itself, Gilman praised the professorship as “an early recognition of this intimate relationship” that must develop between California and the cultures and peoples of East Asia.

Indeed, he envisioned Berkeley as a kind of bilateral intercultural study center. “Would it not be fit,” he asked, “that in this vicinity, near to, if not in connection with, this University, a high seminary should be founded...having the double purpose of enlightening Americans in respect to the languages, literature, and history of the East, and of instructing the Chinese and Japanese in modern languages and the sciences of Europe and America?”

President Gilman, then, would no doubt applaud the determination of his successors to bring under one roof this potent combination of the C. V. Starr East Asian Library and the Chang-Lin Tien Center for East Asian Studies. He also would admire, I am certain, the University’s partnership with generous philanthropists in that effort. “It is true that [the] State has been, and is likely to be, liberal in its appropriations,” he asserted in his inaugural address (ah, were that still the case!), “but a great University requires almost unlimited means for its support”—how true—“...[and] must look to men of wealth to provide the richer and more complete endowments which will place our University by the side of her older sisters at the East.” Needless to say, generous and public-spirited men and women of wealth can be counted among the most prominent supporters of this project.

What thoughts might this potent combination inspire regarding the future of Asian studies? The history of Asian studies in the United States is long and complicated, shaped by powerful external forces of missionary, mercantile, and military interests, riven by internal disputes over methodology and mission. Many of its definitional issues have thankfully been resolved, as scholars have proved themselves able to simultaneously acquire both linguistic mastery and disciplinary training—once thought mutually exclusive skill sets. Now, with globalization an existential reality and universities rushing to internationalize their faculty and curricula, Asian studies must continue to assert its claim that global knowledge starts with the local. As UCLA anthropologist Sherry Ortner once exclaimed in exasperation at an ACLS meeting, “Globalization is all over the place!” If so, what better strategy than to devote concerted attention to one place? And we don’t want, as someone put it at a conference I attended this past weekend, to “simply add Asia and stir.” Rather, the study of Asia must continue to embrace the same principles that

are largely responsible for the University's strength today: fidelity to core academic values and standards, openness to the changes presented by the wider world, and equilateral engagement and collaboration with trans-Pacific partners.

While it's undeniable that the appeal of contemporary political and economic affairs is responsible for a great deal of student and public interest in Asia, Asianists must be vigilant in affirming the humanistic core of Asian studies, both institutionally and intellectually. Daniel Boorstin, the historian and former librarian of Congress, once observed that to try to create the future without some knowledge of the past is like trying to plant cut flowers. This is a lesson Asianists know well because it's ingrained in the very traditions we study, and it's one we ignore at our peril. Without deep and broad historical, religious, and cultural training we risk settling for some version of Asian studies "lite." And I'm not advocating for some monolithic, immutable, essentialized ideal of the Orient, but rather Asia in all of its heterogeneity and complexity.

What lies at the core of this enterprise? Here again I can turn to President Gilman: "In the study of humanity and history, *language* is the master-key which unlocks all doors." In the case of East Asian studies, the investment necessary to acquire that master-key may be daunting, but it is nonetheless imperative. Investment by the individual student is essential, of course, but that commitment can only be made if there has been an earlier social, institutional, and national investment in the infrastructure of language learning embedded in its holistic context. At this moment, legislators and policy makers are clamoring for more "internationalization" to ensure "competitiveness." The tenor of this discussion often discomfits area studies specialists, especially when it moves beyond competitiveness to national security.

The best way to engage with these discussions is to keep our core values firmly in mind. One useful starting point is a report entitled *International Education and Foreign Languages: Keys to Securing America's Future*, issued earlier this year by a panel appointed by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences. The report's authors courageously swim upstream against a current that demands immediate, easily measured payoff on federal investments. "[L]ike federal funding for science," the report asserts, "federal funding for language and area studies may have future benefits that are difficult to quantify." Thus, "[m]aintaining capacity for the

teaching of languages and cultures in areas that are not of current strategic importance to the United States but may be in the future is important.”<sup>2</sup>

As Columbia School of International Affairs professor Kenneth Prewitt, one of the panelists, commented in a press briefing on the report, “You don’t know what the critical language is going to be 20 years from now, and you need a reservoir.”<sup>3</sup> Shifting the metaphor slightly, the sociologist Nancy Ruther has made the broader point that “higher education is an aquifer, not a spigot; universities cannot be built in response to immediate needs, as the spigot someone can turn on for the expertise they need at the moment. Universities should be conceived as a deep reserve, built up slowly and sustained over the long term, on the assumption that though specific needs will arise, they cannot be anticipated.”<sup>4</sup>

“It’s no accident,” commented Mary Pratt, president of the Modern Language Association, “that a discussion of international education occasioned [Ruther’s] reflection. Deep knowledge of particular parts of the world cannot be produced overnight. It has to be built up over years, supported through real relationships with people and institutions abroad, passed along, invested in, and valued independent of the contingencies, fears, and passions of a moment.”<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, we must be open to approaches that embrace regional and comparative perspectives. If the importance of sustained and extensive study of language, culture, and society remains beyond dispute, so too is the value of creating structures within which questions can also be asked thematically and across national and regional boundaries. I’ve always thought it useful to keep in mind M. H. Abrams’s wise reminder that “the endemic disease of analytical thinking is hardening of the categories.”<sup>6</sup> Without abandoning the centrality of deep cultural and historical knowledge, can the traditional area studies paradigm be transcended in more nimble and flexible

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<sup>2</sup> O’Connell, Mary Ellen, and Janet L. Norwood, eds. *International Education and Foreign Languages: Keys to Securing America’s Future*. Washington: National Academies P, 2007. Print.

<sup>3</sup> Millman, Sierra. “Education Dept. Should Have High-Ranking Official to Oversee Foreign-Language Study, Report Says.” *Chronicle of Higher Education* 28 Mar. 2007. Print.

<sup>4</sup> Qtd. in Pratt, Mary Louise, “President’s Column.” *MLA Newsletter* Winter 2003: 3. Print.

<sup>5</sup> Pratt, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Abrams, Meyer H. *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*. New York: Oxford U P, 1971. 33–34. Print.



frameworks that are multilateral, multipolar, and not necessarily permanent? Can we be area based without being area bound? Does knowledge have borders?

As illustrative answers to those questions, let me mention two projects that ACLS has supported recently in a program we carry out with the support of the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange. The program's selection committee, which included Professor David Johnson of Berkeley, has funded several workshops and conferences focused on topics that are transnational and interregional (words that humanists used to put scare quotes around). One project, for example, led by John Radke of Berkeley's Geographic Information Science Center, has brought together researchers from the United States, Southeast Asia, Taiwan, and China to rethink the nature and characteristics of trade between China and Southeast Asia from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. They are utilizing new digital technologies (most notably geographic information systems) that have greatly enhanced capacities for mapping, data integration, and visualization; they are also making use of essential digitized data from archives in China and Taiwan.

Across the bay, Professor Walter Scheidel from the Stanford Department of Classics has organized another project comparing the ancient Chinese and Mediterranean empires. Starting from the observation that "[t]wo thousand years ago, up to one-half of the human species was contained within two political systems, the Roman empire in western Eurasia...and the Han empire in eastern Eurasia,"<sup>7</sup> he will be working with colleagues from the Academia Sinica to carry out a comparative study of the two empires, seeking to test predictive theories concerning state power and social control and to identify variables that might account for significant similarities and differences.

These efforts point to a final imperative for the future of Asian studies: We must nurture collaboration, partnerships, and the development of genuinely transnational scholarly communities with Asia and, indeed, with scholars throughout the world. As the projects I just described suggest, there are significant intellectual reasons for doing so. The scope, process, and results of scholarly research can only be enlarged and enriched by the greater amount and variety of human capital invested in it. Equally important will be the beneficial impact on the structures that organize knowledge, of which the university is the most visible. We are at a moment of

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<sup>7</sup> Scheidel, Walter. *Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires*. Oxford: Oxford U P, 2008 (forthcoming). Print.

significant and exciting systemic change in global higher education, one no less thoroughgoing—and much more extensive—than the prospect of educational innovation President Gilman invoked in his inaugural address 135 years ago. The twenty-first-century world economy has revealed education to be the single most reliable engine of national and international prosperity and well-being. Nations around the world are critically measuring their own university systems against the achievements of others', and mandating subsequent improvements in both practice and structure. Most Asian countries are increasing significantly—dramatically in the case of China—their investment in higher education. International constellations of educational leaders are seeking to develop standards that will allow for greater mobility of students and scholars throughout the emerging global system, standards that will make that system more internationally interoperable.

This process cannot, however, simply be mandated from above. The most successful university systems possess both strong vertical structures—universities and research agencies—as well as energetic horizontal linkages—learned societies and flexible, even fluid scholarly networks—that are vital to the creation of knowledge and to upholding standards of excellence and scholarly independence. Transnational research partnerships, whether through spontaneous collaborative research among individual scholars or more sustained efforts such as the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative, are powerful vectors of infection for intellectual and educational innovation.

One example of international collaborative work we are pursuing at the American Council for Learned Societies is a new program administered in partnership with the Henry Luce Foundation, long a mainstay in philanthropic support of East Asian studies, including events this week; we are all in its debt. Our joint program on East Asian archaeology and early history was developed in response to what we saw as an unprecedented opportunity. Asia's rush to the future has uncovered deep layers of its past; its headlong economic development has literally unearthed artifacts and settlement sites of ancient peoples and civilizations. And analysis and interpretation of these new discoveries are transforming not only scholarly conceptions of Asian history but also our notions of human history, globally understood. But without concerted attention to assess and protect what's now being uncovered at so astonishing a rate, we will miss the only moment to authenticate invaluable data about some of the world's oldest continuing civilizations. It's worth noting that these new understandings are not merely scholarly abstractions but revelations that are deeply consequential for the cultural and ultimately political self-image of many contemporary Asian nations.

We identified a second challenge: the need to foster the development of a new generation of experts. The problem is not the absence of knowledgeable and energetic scholars studying early East Asia; we have many exemplars for the next generation. But we lack robust structures to ensure the succession of such scholars and to sustain a genuinely transnational community of knowledge. Because the current weaknesses of the relevant scholarly communities on each side of the Pacific are curiously complementary—institutional fragility in North America and intellectual insularity in Asia—there is a clear opportunity to engage both sides in new forms of collaboration among communities of scholars, whether it be formal collaborative research, training programs, or field work. I'm happy to report that a Berkeley project codirected by anthropology professors Junko Habu and Sabrina Agarwal was awarded a major collaborative research grant under the auspices of this Luce/ACLS program.

Finally, what can be said about the role of libraries in this history of collaboration in East Asian studies and of scholarship more generally, and what will it be in the future? I think Peter Zhou, the director of this East Asian Library, was poignantly correct when he wrote in his newsletter, "Like people, books migrate."<sup>8</sup> Although probably not what he meant, I couldn't help thinking his point might best be made by the example of a certain tenth-century grand vizier of Persia who, I'm told, never left home without his collection of 117,000 volumes, carried by a caravan of 400 camels trained to walk in alphabetical order.<sup>9</sup> In any event, Peter has also noted that American libraries are "sanctuaries for books from all over the world."<sup>10</sup> Indeed, passions for books and for collecting them were significant motivations for the formal establishment of East Asian studies in the United States. A nineteenth-century donation from Berkeley professor John Fryer constituted the core of the collection gathered into the Starr Library today. The historical enormousness of Chinese publishing also helped inspire the early work of my organization in supporting and stimulating East Asian studies. Back in 1929, the assistant secretary of ACLS wrote:

That the next decade will see a striking increase in American interest in Chinese studies is no very daring prediction.... The fact, however, that the East, in general, and the Chinese world in particular, has an important contribution to make in the humanistic and social sciences is only receiving belated recognition.

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<sup>8</sup> "Letter from the Director," *Newsletter of the East Asian Library* [University of California-Berkeley] 2 (Fall 2006): 2. Print.

<sup>9</sup> Manguel, Alberto. *A History of Reading*. New York: Viking, 1996. 193. Print.

<sup>10</sup> "Letter from the Director," 2.

The immensity of this contribution can be suggested by the recital of a few pertinent facts. It has been estimated that prior to 1750 more books had been published in Chinese than in all other languages combined. As late as 1850, Chinese books outnumbered those in any other language. Even in 1928, the largest publishing house in the world was located not in New York, or London, or Paris, or Berlin, but in Shanghai. And little of the literature thus produced is ephemeral...[but instead concerns] history, topography, philosophy, poetry, and commentary on the classics.... Indeed, it would be no very difficult task to maintain the thesis that in none of the world's civilizations has knowledge for its own sake played so prominent a part over so long a time as in that of China.<sup>11</sup>

The same can certainly be said of the documents of Japanese and Korean culture gathered in the C. V. Starr Library today. These rich collections are a culmination of a great effort, one that is certain to continue. Books will continue to migrate and will be given sanctuary at the University of California, to which, truly, nothing human is alien.

But these magnificent print holdings are in one sense but the premise for what lies ahead in library science, research, and public culture. One of the speakers in the next session, Deanna Marcum, associate librarian for library resources at the Library of Congress, articulated a vision at a conference in Japan last year, of "a library...universal in its content, drawing upon digitized copies of the contents of the world's great libraries—the books, the periodicals, the manuscripts, the images, and the other material previously usable only within our separate libraries' walls. Such a library would also be universal in availability, open via Internet-connected computers to everyone in the world."<sup>12</sup> This compelling vision of a world digital library is something that I trust that the Pacific Rim Digital Library Alliance meeting here will keep firmly in its sights.

While this effort has already raised many technological, legal, and financial issues, this morning I want to stress the considerable scholarly and intellectual challenges we face. The work of building the world digital library cannot be that of librarians alone; it requires the partnership of humanists and social scientists. Last year, the ACLS Commission on Cyberinfrastructure in the

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<sup>11</sup> "The Promotion of Chinese Studies." *American Council of Learned Societies Bulletin* 10 (April 1929): 3.

<sup>12</sup> Marcum, Deanna. "Is a World Digital Library Possible?" Kanazawa Institute of Technology/Council on Library and Information Resources International Roundtable for Library and Information Science, Kanazawa, Japan. 6–7 July, 2006. Address.

Humanities and Social Sciences issued a report with the aim of broadening scholarly engagement with the digital future.<sup>13</sup> The commission stressed, over and over, the importance of a collective effort. Scholars must collaborate with librarians to select materials to be digitized, to determine the annotations and metadata to be attached, and to specify the tools that will make the digitized material accessible, searchable, and capable of being redeployed for new representations of knowledge.

The prospect of the world digital library is thus the premise for an even more expansive vision of global collaboration. When Charles Vest, the president emeritus of MIT, delivered the 2005 Clark Kerr Lecture on the Role of Higher Education in Society here at Berkeley, he observed that “a global meta-university is arising,” and predicted that “[t]he rise of this meta-university of globally created and shared teaching materials, scholarly archives, and even laboratories could well be a dominant, democratizing force in the next few decades.”<sup>14</sup>

Let me conclude with a tale I’ve recounted many times, a story of two letters that, together, seem to mark a transformation in building such a trans-Pacific community of academic inquiry. The first, from 1972, is preserved, along with our articles of incorporation and U.S. Congressional Charter, in the Important Papers File at the ACLS offices. It is on one sheet of neatly ruled paper. The letter is a response to another letter—from then-president Frederick H. Burkhardt (who, sadly, just passed away last month at the age of 95) to the Chinese Academy of Sciences, inviting a delegation to an international conference on Taoism convened by ACLS and colleague organizations. The responding letter from China is signed by the “Red Guard Team in [the] Academy of Sciences.” Its penmanship is graceful, but its tone is fierce:

We have received the two letters you sent us on behalf of the American Council of Learned Societies. We the Chinese people are very dubious about your purpose and intention of your sending the two letters to us. Religions the very product of remaining feudal systems had long been listed among those objects which should be struggled and destroyed as early as at a time when China was

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<sup>13</sup> *Our Cultural Commonwealth: The report of the American Council of Learned Societies Commission on Cyberinfrastructure for the Humanities and Social Sciences*. New York: American Council of Learned Societies, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Vest, Charles M. *The American Research University from World War II to Word Wide Web: Governments, the Private Sector, and the Emerging Meta-University*. Berkeley: U of California P and Center for Studies in Higher Education, 2007. 108. Print.

liberated by Chairman Mao. At present the People's Republic of China has only Mao Tsetung Thought. All other sects are big poisonous weeds and they are not allowed to exist under the revolutionary line of the proletariat dictatorship.

Whether or not you are thinking again to poison the revolutionary Chinese people by the help of religion and to revive remaining feudal ideology among the Chinese people with the invitation of our representatives to attend the International Taoism Conference. The aggressive ambitions and schemes of the United States can never be concealed before the devil-finding mirror of Mao Tsetung thought. Here we would solemnly warn you that if you dare to play any schemes and tricks, we will certainly smash your dog head.

Long Live down with U.S. imperialism!

Long Live Mao Tsetung Thought!

I ask you to consider this letter alongside another message I received not long ago. This was an e-mail addressed to "Honorific lady pauline yu," from an author who explains his distinctive prose by noting, "I do not understand English, the draft write with English translation software" and continues (in much edited form):

I am a member of Communist Party of China and socialisms. I know that you do academic exchange work of China and the United States from the network.

The US is a democratic nation, China is the socialist nation, this is the social system totally different two nations. So I think: the US and China through academic exchanges should understand the other party mutually....

The democratic institution and the centralization systems must comprehend each other, peaceful coexistence.... We can do not like the other social system of the other party mutually, but understand to always have the advantage mutually of!

What has changed? China is still socialist—or at least some who represent it in correspondence are. The literary quality of that correspondence has declined, or has certainly been lost in translation, even as its cordiality has increased. Also notably increased is the possibility of intellectual partnership. Was President Gilman correct when he proclaimed that "the Occident will not be distanced"? Will the twenty-first century see a new transnational scholarship able to

comprehend simultaneously the global commonalities and the heterogeneity of local particularities? When Zhou Enlai was asked by Henry Kissinger for his opinion of the French Revolution, he is said to have replied, "It's too soon to tell." What we can tell, here and now, however, is that the C. V. Starr East Asian Library and Chang-Lin Tien East Asian Center together represent a resource of truly global significance, a commitment to the centrality of humanistic teaching and research, and a capacious platform for scholarly communication that can stand as a model for institutions around the world.

Congratulations, and thank you.