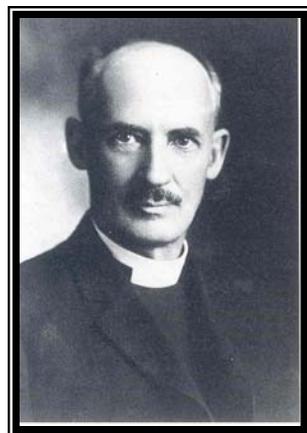


THE MU COLLECTION was the beginning of the East Asian studies collection at the University of Toronto and the first Chinese collection in Canada. The story of its journey from China to Canada goes back seventy-five years. The tale began with an Anglican Bishop, William Charles White of Toronto. Bishop White (1873-1960) was the first Anglican Bishop in Henan Province in China (1910-1934) and the first Canadian bishop to be consecrated for service in the mission field. In 1897, at the young age of twenty-three, he accepted a mission post and went to China. During his thirty-eight years there, he developed a deep love for Chinese culture. His dream was to bring and interpret the East to the West. This led him to become committed to bringing awareness and understanding of Chinese civilization and culture back to his home country of Canada. It was the pursuit of this dream that inspired his efforts to collect Chinese artifacts for the ROM and to purchase the Mu Library for a new Centre for Chinese Studies (which he would lead) at the University of Toronto, of which the ROM was then an integral part.



The Mu Library was once the personal collection of Mr. Mu Hsüeh-hsün, (Mu Xuexun, in pinyin 慕學勛 1880-1929), a scholar who served as the secretary of the German Legation in Beijing for 17 years (1912-1929). When he passed away in 1929, he bequeathed his fine collection to his son, but because the Mu family had fallen on hard times, the son had no choice but to sell the library. The only condition attached to the sale was that the library must be kept intact in a research institution.

In 1933, while he was on a trip to Beijing to purchase artifacts for the ROM, Bishop White learned of the library and the conditions for its sale. He immediately made an offer to purchase the entire collection. The money needed for payment was raised with help from Dr. Sigmund Samuel, Sir Robert Mond, both lifelong supporters of the ROM, Professor John C. Ferguson, a leading Canadian scholar of Chinese art residing in China at that time, and the Bishop himself. The books were purchased and in due course were shipped to the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. The new Library opened officially on 5 November 1937 with the name 'Professor H.H. Mu Library of Chinese Books'. Bishop White was appointed the first Keeper of the Library.

The Mu Collection gave birth to two libraries: the original Professor H.H. Mu Library of Chinese Books (now named the H.H. Mu Far Eastern Library) at the Royal Ontario Museum, and the East Asiatic Studies Library (now renamed the Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library) at the University of Toronto, which holds the majority of the Mu Collection. The legacy of Bishop White's foresight and his astute purchase in 1933 has made Toronto an important centre for the study of the cultures of China, Japan and Korea.