

time and effort.

However, for national libraries to be relevant and successful, users must feel that their needs are met and if they prefer to use library materials from wherever they are, this is one way libraries can work towards, to bring as much of its unique materials to its users via the web, either freely or for a fee.

This is one perspective that I would like to share here. I have to say that I have been immensely impressed by the National Central Library, Taipei, Taiwan for its progressive effort to create a rights approval service for commercial and other publishers at the point of receiving legal deposit items.

Our heartiest congratulations again to the National Central Library on your 80th anniversary celebrations!

■ ***“If books are not good company, where will I find it?” How Libraries Show Us Ourselves***

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Great libraries are arrays of mirrors. They gather light from the past, show us places that were invisible, and allow us to see ourselves in sharper focus today. I have visited the National Central Library in Taipei and seen its collections; but I have not worked with them. Therefore I cannot testify about the world they reveal. I can speak about the mirror array at the library of the University of California, Berkeley. We are across the Pacific but able to shed light on what Americans understood about the Chinese people.

We have, of course, a vast collection of Chinese materials in our C. V. Starr East Asian Library. The white granite building with its bronze screen is a tribute to an immigrant from Taiwan, our former Chancellor, Chang-Lin Tien (1935-2002, figure 1). He is honored as the first Asian American to lead a major research university in the United States.



Figure 1: Chang-Lin Tien

Here, and in other libraries across campus, we have the record of our faculty’s engagement across the Pacific, beginning with the scholar who built library collections to start the conversation, John Fryer (1839-1928, figure 2).



Figure 2: John Fryer

The picture of Professor Fryer, appropriately dressed as a Chinese Official of the Third Rank in government service, following his educational work in Hong Kong, Beijing, and Shanghai. The photograph rests in our Bancroft Library. Nearby is this picture of his famous contemporary, Samuel Clemens (1835-1910, figure 3): Mark Twain.



Figure 3: Samuel Clemens

It is at this small mirror we will now look. Mark Twain, though well known in the Chinese-speaking world, was no John Fryer! The popular writer never stepped on Chinese soil and did not understand the Chinese language. His famous work, *Life on the Mississippi* and *The Innocents Abroad* easily come to mind, take us to lands far removed from China. But Mark Twain puzzled over China and observed the Chinese he encountered very closely, especially in the American West. This was part of his lifelong effort to see clearly the moral standing of the United States at home and abroad. If you step into the Bancroft Library at Berkeley, the home of his papers, or read what we have put on the internet for anyone, anywhere around the globe, you can see our array of mirrors at work.

Mark Twain put his view of the Chinese on the front page of the *New York Tribune* in 1868. This was America's first national newspaper and it was the voice of the new Republican Party (GOP). China was news in 1868 because of the commitment of the party to trade and human rights. The Burlingame Treaty was designed to give China and Chinese overseas new recognition, advancing each cause. For the first time, American politics had turned to China. In an argument of 7,000 words that stretched to nearly 60 column inches, Mark Twain raised his voice so attention would be paid.

Mark Twain had been led to dream of China by the principal author of the Treaty, Anson Burlingame. (Burlingame had the confidence of reformers in the Qing Dynasty as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary for a Chinese diplomatic mission to the United States.) The two Americans had met on different assignments across the Pacific and Clemens savored the idea of a study tour suggested by the older man. He wrote his mother that "if I come to China in the first trip of the great mail steamer & make his house in Pekin my home, he will afford me facilities that few men can have here for seeing & learning." The idea continued to roll around Twain's mind, with the frequency that young people today in North America consider plunging into East Asia.

The story on the front page was neither

academic nor humorous. Mark Twain gave bitter testimony that the fair dealing promised in the Burlingame Treaty was long over-due. "I have seen Chinamen abused and maltreated in all the mean, cowardly ways possible," he said, calling up street scenes in San Francisco. He said that with the Treaty, "the best and worthiest of her citizens will be glad to know that the days of persecuting Chinamen are over in California." Mark Twain wanted New Yorkers to know that the flow of the Chinese into the West was "the best class of people—in some respects, though not in all—that comes to us from foreign lands (Chinese) are the most faithful, the most temperate, and most peaceable, and most industrious." These "quick and intelligent" newcomers, he wrote, would progress from their current role in manual labor to enjoy full opportunities and legal rights. He saw them as potential members of Congress. The Chinese, Mark Twain added from experience, "possess the rare and probably peculiarly barbarous faculty of minding their own business."

Mark Twain had no way of knowing how wrong he was on this point and that the Burlingame Treaty would soon make possible the first wave of Chinese students coming to North America in great numbers. But in supporting the Treaty with such fervor, he had a role in seeing that the "business" of young Chinese would become global.

While Mark Twain was a reporter who favored what he had witnessed over what he had only heard about, his perspective on the Chinese was broad. He asked Americans to heed the example of Singapore, where he had heard the Chinese were showing extraordinary abilities and gaining great status.

There were probably fewer than three hundred Chinese in all of New York when Mark Twain took to the front page; a much smaller number of them could read his English. It would have been natural for readers to wonder if this rising author was really their friend. Samuel Clemens had once viewed the Chinese quite differently. At seventeen years old he had seen all non-whites on Manhattan streets, including the Chinese, as "vermin" (a slur that was common in the highly racial society in

which Mark Twain was raised). He spent the next decade developing a far more enlightened view of the Chinese laborers he saw in the West. How and why did he change?"

This is what libraries are for. They allow us to see what Mark Twain read, and what he made of his reading. Through his correspondence we can see his mind at work. It is only by wrestling with the full range of what Samuel Clemens put on paper that we can see the growth of a man born into unthinking acceptance of the racial and imperial thinking of his day.

He became, of course, a critic of these traditional ways of thought. This is famously so for the issue of African Americans and their rights. It is not as well known that Samuel Clemens was a bitter critic of the imperial order in Asia-- well before he spoke up on older forms of discrimination in the United States. In the New York Tribune he was working towards the contempt he would express loudly after traveling again across the Pacific. For example, in *Following the Equator* (1898) he observed that on the borders of China "our land-robbery, claim-jumping, is becoming a European governmental frenzy." This was typical of Mark Twain's scorn for imperialism and its impact on this part of the world.

For generations, Mark Twain scholars have lived off the trove of letters and drafts that were not published in his lifetime, detective work that has no end. In 2010 the Mark Twain Papers made available to the general public the first volume of the full Autobiography of Mark Twain. The correct, uncensored text had not been published before. The general editor of the Mark Twain Project, Robert Hirst, reports that a week rarely goes by without a personal letter or scrap of Clemens' writing, possibly genuine, appearing for sale on the internet. We are still learning about how Mark Twain came to see China and the Chinese the way he did.

The documents that sit in the Bancroft Library and go out to the world at the click of a few keys, are part of a living reminder of the philosophy that guides great libraries, the National Central Library in Taipei among them.

The small mirror from the Berkeley library

can make us look at West meeting East in ways we should not forget.

First there is this, in the letter to his mother that shows us young Samuel Clemens taking his first despairing look at the Chinese. He adds the good news that he has found free libraries. "If books are not good company, where will I find it?"

Second there is the view out the airplane window when a scholar from Asia lands at the San Francisco Airport, or when North Americans take off from this hub for Asia: It is a city, named to honor Mark Twain's mentor, Anson Burlingame.

Sources:

1. I am grateful to my library colleagues Robert Hirst and Peter Zhou for discerning comments. The opening of sources to readers, wherever they may live, is a proud achievement of libraries today. To see Mark Twain's correspondence in full context, explore: <http://www.marktwainproject.org/>
2. See his letters to Jane Lampton Clemens on Aug. 31, 1853 and on June 27, 1866; to Anson Burlingame, Feb. 19, 1868 (two letters); and to Mary Mason Fairbanks, June 17, 1868.
3. Other "e-Scholarship," supported by the University of California, makes once obscure primary sources, as well as the latest scholarship, available in a true revolution of access: <http://cshe.berkeley.edu/publications/chronicle/7/Fryer.pdf> <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/2r87m203> (The Treaty with China)
4. Martin Zehr, "Mark Twain, 'The Treaty with China,' and the Chinese Connection," is very helpful and available at <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/5t02n321>
5. Mark Twain, *Following the Equator; a Journey Around the World* (Hartford, CT 1898), 624 -- Available through HathiTrust <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/nyp.33433003303025>

Spotlights

■ *IFLA President Dr. Ingrid Parent Gave Special Address and Visited NCL*

Dr. Ingrid Parent, the President of IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations