

2021

HARVARD-YENCHING  
INSTITUTE WORKING  
PAPER SERIES

FROM HARVARD YARD TO DIVINITY  
AVENUE: THE HARVARD-YENCHING  
INSTITUTE'S TWO HOMES

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## From Harvard Yard to Divinity Avenue: The Harvard-Yenching Institute's Two Homes<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The Harvard-Yenching Institute, an independent foundation whose mission is to advance higher education in Asia, funded by the endowment from Charles Hall's estate, has had its home in two different places during its nearly a century history: Boylston Hall and 2 Divinity Avenue, two landmark buildings on Harvard University's main campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts. While the Harvard-Yenching Institute, currently located at 2 Divinity Avenue, well known for its prestigious fellowship program and full service to support East Asian Studies in Asia as well as at Harvard, the story was seldom known and rarely told about its connection to Boylston Hall and of the early history of 2 Divinity Avenue, built for the highly controversial Institute of Geographical Exploration. Central to the story are the construction of these two buildings, funding sources, and architectural renovation and expansion in relation to the history of the development and expansion of East Asian Studies and the ill-fated field of geography, abolished as a discipline of study at Harvard. This paper is an attempt to trace the history of the two major buildings at Harvard to reestablish connection between architecture and formation and evolution of academic disciplines and highlight the important role that the Harvard-Yenching Institute plays in the development and expansion of East Asian Studies and library collection at Harvard.

In Harvard Yard, between Boylston Hall and the west side of Widener Library, stands an ancient Chinese stele. Newly arrived students and visitors and tourists from all over the world stop by and discover this gift from Harvard's Chinese Alumni on the happy occasion of their Alma Mater's tercentennial celebration in 1936, but few know the story of why the Chinese stele was erected on this spot in the first place, separate from both the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies on Cambridge Street and the Harvard-Yenching Institute at 2 Divinity Avenue. When I was a graduate student at Harvard, 2 Divinity Avenue and Boylston Hall were the two buildings I visited most frequently. Upon my arrival at Harvard, the first building I visited was 2 Divinity Avenue to take a look at the famous Harvard-Yenching Library, whereas Boylston Hall became my favorite place in the Yard much later -- during the final year

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Susan Scott for providing HYI archival materials for my research and to Professor Elizabeth Perry for helping edit the draft of the paper.

of my student life when I was writing my dissertation, and at the same time working as a teaching fellow for East Asian Studies Sophomore Tutorials and a general education course on Chinese History. I found Boylston Hall, conveniently located right near the center of the Yard, a perfect place to meet with undergraduates after sections and answer their questions and requests. The Ticknor lounge felt particularly relaxing, its wide-open space allowing us to drink coffee and eat lunch while the computers located outside in the hallway were a convenient means of checking emails. However, it was only many years after I started to work for the Harvard-Yenching Institute that I found out that both 2 Divinity Avenue and Boylston Hall have a special historical connection to the Institute. What a coincidence!

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Harvard-Yenching Institute was located in two different places: Boylston Hall, in front of which the above mentioned Chinese ancient stele was erected, and 2 Divinity Avenue, where the Harvard-Yenching Institute and Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations are located today. Boylston Hall was the first home for the Harvard-Yenching Institute, founded in 1928, and later on, also for the Department of Far Eastern Languages (currently the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations), established in 1937. In 1958, both the Institute and the Department moved to their current location at 2 Divinity Avenue, but the stele, which together with its elaborately carved tortoise base weighs some twenty tons, remains in front of Boylston Hall in Harvard Yard as “testimony to the University’s enduring commitment to international education and its long engagement with the study of the wider world.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Boylston Hall**

Boylston Hall, one of the oldest buildings in the Old Harvard Yard, was named after the Boylston family -- one of the Boston Brahmins -- as the two Boylston Streets respectively in downtown Boston and in Jamaica Plain, the town of Boylston in Massachusetts, and Harvard’s Boylston Professorship of Rhetoric and

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<sup>2</sup> The History page of the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, <https://fairbank.fas.harvard.edu/300th-anniversary-stele/>

Oratory, due to its connection to Ward Nicholas Boylston (1747–1828) of the family. In 1828, Ward Boylston left Harvard a handsome bequest with terms which specified that a stone building be erected to house an Anatomical Museum and Library, and a Chemical Laboratory. He also donated a valuable collection of medical and anatomical works, including anatomy books and carvings, as well as funds for Harvard's Boylston Medical Library and the Boylston Anatomical Museum. In addition, Ward Boylston stipulated that a big auditorium should be built inside.

The firm of Schultze and Schoen was hired to design and build Boylston Hall according to Ward Boylston's will. The two-story construction was completed in 1858 on the southeast corner of the Old Yard, on the west side of, and adjacent to Widener, standing out in Harvard Yard due to its Italian Renaissance style.<sup>3</sup> Aside from its architectural style being different from most of the New Georgian Buildings on campus, Boylston Hall has also been known for frequent expansions, remodeling and renovations. In 1871, Peabody and Stearns continued the major expansion project and added a third floor to the building, following which the Chemistry Department moved from University Hall to Boylston Hall where the first chemistry laboratory in the US was set up. This newly expanded building was better equipped for a chemistry laboratory than University Hall, but the original plan was to have the Department of Chemistry and its laboratory housed in Boylston Hall only for a short time before a permanent location would be made available. However, a "short time" turned into more than half a century -- the Chemistry Department remained in Boylston Hall until Mallinckrodt Chemistry Laboratory was built at Oxford Street in 1928.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Paul Schulze, a prominent 19th century architect, was born in Breslau, Germany in 1828. He studied at the technical high school in Breslau and later trained in architect offices in Vienna and Berlin. He immigrated to Boston in 1849 and designed two buildings for Harvard University, Appleton Chapel (the predecessor of the Memorial Church at Harvard Yard) and Boylston Hall. He moved to New York in 1857 where he worked with many architects including Paul F. Schoen with whom he formed the partnership Schulze & Schoen.

<sup>4</sup> <https://rll.fas.harvard.edu/pages/boylston-hall> The Harvard Crimson, 1929/9/27. The move of the Chemistry Department to the new Mallinckrodt Chemistry Laboratory (12 Oxford Street) in 1928 freed the Boylston building for library and other purposes, and "further space for some of our books and room for certain departments of the Library will be afforded by the projected move to Boylston Hall." Harvard Library Bulletin, 1950, p 411-412.

The relocation of the Chemistry Department freed up ample space in Boylston Hall.<sup>5</sup> Due to its proximity, the Bindery Unit of Widener Library moved into Boylston Hall first, allowing its staff to conveniently move back and forth between these two buildings. Cramped for space, the History Department relinquished its collection of books for undergraduates and moved it into Boylston Hall. Most relevant to this paper is the third unit that moved into Boylston Hall -- the earliest collection of Chinese and Japanese books at Harvard. When reporting on Boylston Hall's renovation and its prospective new occupants, the Harvard Crimson noted: "another fortunate change will be the placing of the Chinese collection in Boylston Hall. These volumes are at present scattered, occupying various portions of Widener Library, some being placed on the top floor, other portions of the collection being on the main and second floors. All the pieces will be gathered."<sup>6</sup> For the first time in the history of Harvard University Library, East Asian books were gathered together as one single collection and moved from Widener to Boylston Hall as a home base in a central location in Harvard Yard.

Harvard had started to collect Chinese and Japanese books in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century after Ge Kunhua (Ko K'un-Hua 戈鯤化, 1838-1882), the university's first Chinese language instructor, arrived at Harvard in 1879 from Ningpo, China. In 1910, the University expanded its East Asian collection with the gradual acquisition of a small number of Chinese books. The first major acquisition of East Asian books came from two Japanese scholars, Professor Hattori Unokichi (服部宇之吉, 1867-1939) and Professor Anesaki Masaharu (姉崎正治, 1873-1949) who donated 1,600 Japanese books before they returned to Japan in 1914 after finishing their term as visiting professors at the

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<sup>5</sup> <https://rll.fas.harvard.edu/pages/boylston-hall> The Harvard Crimson, 1929/9/27. Boylston Hall hosted the Chemistry Department, but moved to the new Mallinckrodt Chemistry Laboratory (12 Oxford Street) in 1928. This move freed the Boylston building for library and other purposes. Harvard Library Bulletin, 1950, p 411-412. Harvard University Librarian's Annual Report (1927-28): "Further space for some of our books and room for certain departments of the Library will be afforded by the projected move to Boylston Hall."

<sup>6</sup> *The Harvard Crimson*, October 3, 1928.

Philosophy Department.<sup>7</sup> However, what enabled Harvard University Library to fully launch an acquisition project of collecting Chinese and Japanese books was the endowment from Charles Martin Hall (1863-1914), the American aluminum tycoon and the founder of the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA), to support teaching and research and advancement of higher education in Asia in the humanities and social sciences, with special attention to the study of Asian culture.

Mr. Hall's Trustees proposed establishing a new research center with his estate in 1925 through collaboration between Harvard University and Yenching University and other Christian colleges in China, with a mission to promote teaching and research on Chinese culture. As a result of intense and lengthy consultation and discussion among John Leighton Stuart (司徒雷登 1876-1962), the President of Yenching University, William Hung (洪業 1893-1980), Director of Yenching University Library, and Wallace B. Donham (1877-1954), Dean of Harvard Business School, a tentative agreement was reached to set up a new center in China called the "Harvard-Peking Institute for Chinese Studies." Archibald Cary Coolidge, the inaugural director of the Harvard University Library, proposed that the Library of Yenching University identify and purchase Chinese books for Harvard, a proposal which was supported by William Hung. The Hall Trustees entrusted Leighton Stuart to identify a Chinese college librarian to undertake the acquisition task for the Harvard Library. Both the Hall trustees and Yenching University agreed, following further discussion, on acquisition plans, selection criteria, shipping arrangements, exchange logistics, etc. This was the beginning of the collaboration between the proposed new institute funded by Hall's estate and Yenching University, with Yenching University entrusted to conduct the task of acquisitions for the Harvard University Library.<sup>8</sup> In 1927, Archibald

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<sup>7</sup> Kuniko Yamada McVey, "By accident and design: Some Provenance Stories behind Interesting and Curious Japanese Materials in the Harvard-Yenching Library", presented at the conference "Beyond the Book" at Stanford University in 2015. Also in, *Beyond the Books* (Forthcoming), 2022.

<sup>8</sup> Harvard-Peking Institute for Chinese Studies. Memorandum of Conference, September 10, 1925 [B], and Preliminary to Establishment Oriental Research Institute, 1927. Harvard-Yenching Institute Archives. 王蕾, 图书馆、出版与教育: 哈佛燕京学社在华中国研究史(1928-1951), 桂林: 广西师范大学出版社, 2018 (Wang Lei, Library, Publishing and Education: A

Coolidge began to teach the very first course on East Asian History at Harvard.<sup>9</sup> While preparing for the course, he gradually accumulated a small collection on East Asia. Since these Chinese and Japanese books were scattered around on different floors of Widener Library, Coolidge hired Alfred Kaiming Chiu (裘開明, 1898-1977), a Chinese doctoral student at the Economics Department, who had served as the Director of Xiamen University Library, to catalog and put this collection in a good order. Being the custodian of the Chinese collection, Chiu became a great pioneer in East Asian Librarianship in North America, and he continued to take charge of East Asian Collection at Harvard for the next 40 years.

1928 turned out to be an auspicious year for East Asian study at Harvard. Prior to the Great Depression and the collapse of world economy, Hall Estate trustees registered the founding of the Harvard-Yenching Institute with the State of Massachusetts. The new Institute, as a private foundation, found Boylston Hall as its first home in 1929 -- with a field office set up at Yenching University in Peiping, China – and settled in the newly renovated space with Harvard’s first collection of more than 4,000 Chinese books and more than 1,000 Japanese books that was now named collectively as “Han He Wen Ku (漢和文庫, the Chinese and Japanese Collection)”.

At Boylston Hall, the Harvard-Yenching Institute became not only a central location for Chinese and Japanese collection at Harvard, but also a public venue for faculty and students in Chinese studies to meet and get together. Professor George H. Chase, Dean of Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, reported to the Harvard-Yenching Institute Board of Trustees that “the use of the Library (in Boylston Hall) was gratifying and that it had become a meeting place for Chinese students at Harvard.” He also

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History of Chinese Studies of Harvard-Yenching Institute in China (1928-1951), Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2018, pp. 320-322.

<sup>9</sup> In addition to his significant contribution “to creating the golden age of the Harvard Department of History and to the transformation of Harvard from a small New England college into an internationally renowned center for research and instruction”, and his help to “widen the academic horizons of Harvard and of his profession by introducing study of other parts of the world as well—particularly the Middle East and Asia—and of modern diplomatic history, Archibald C. Coolidge began the transformation of Harvard’s library into one of the world’s great collections and inspired men in other institutions to emulate him.” When he served as director of the Harvard University library from 1910 through 1928, the Library “became one of the best organized libraries for scholars and students as well as one of the great libraries of the world”. Robert F. Byrnes, “Archibald Cary Coolidge: A Founder of Russian Studies in the United States” in *Slavic Review*, 1978, No. 37 (4), pp. 652-653.

shared a report of the Library “showing expenses for 1927-1928 of \$8,457, with a balance on hand of \$7,193; and a budget for the coming year \$5,500, not including running expenses of about \$4,500 or expenses which might be incident to the removal of the Library from Widener to Boylston Hall.”<sup>10</sup> In 1929, the Chinese and Japanese Collection was officially named “the Chinese-Japanese Library of the Harvard-Yenching Institute (漢和圖書館)” under the management of the Harvard-Yenching Institute, and the Library became the home for Chinese students and scholars of East Asian studies. For instance, Zhou Yiliang (周一良) and Yang Liansheng (楊聯陞) -- both of whom received doctoral training at Harvard in the 1930s and the 1940s with the support of HYI fellowships and later became eminent Chinese historians -- recorded their fond memory of doing research at the Library in Boylston Hall. Zhou Yiliang wrote in his memoir: “The Chinese and Japanese Library of the Harvard-Yenching Institute had an abundant collection of Chinese and Japanese books that can compete with the collection of the Library of Congress. That was where I spent most of my time as a student at Harvard”.<sup>11</sup> And Yang Liansheng recorded numerous entries in his diary with details of times spent at the Library looking for citations and encountering other scholars and visitors.<sup>12</sup>

While the Harvard-Yenching Institute and its Chinese and Japanese collection were settling into Boylston Hall in the Old Yard, Harvard was breaking ground in its “wilderness North” -- to the north of the campus proper, the area around today’s Divinity Avenue -- for a newly founded Institute of Geographical Exploration in 1930.

## 2 Divinity Avenue

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<sup>10</sup> Harvard-Yenching Institute Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, October 1, 1928.

<sup>11</sup> “在哈佛，我的学生生活极为单调，读书之外还是读书。主要工作地点就两处：一是博义思同楼中哈燕社的汉和图书馆，那里中日文藏书之富可以比之美国会图书馆。”《周一良学述》，杭州：浙江人民出版社（Zhou Yiliang, *My Academic life: A Memoir*, Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Publishing House, 2000）.

<sup>12</sup> Yang Liansheng Diaries, 1944-1989, Harvard-Yenching Library.



Since its inception, the Institute of Geographical Exploration had been housed in a brand new building at 2 Divinity Avenue. The founder of the Institute, Alexander Hamilton Rice (1875-1956), was a graduate of Harvard College Class of 1898 and a surgeon by professional training. It was, however, his passion for South America as an amateur explorer and through his family's extraordinary wealth and wide and influential social network that this new Institute came to be set up at Harvard.

A popular socialite in Boston's elite social circle, Rice's wife Eleanor Elkins Widener, was well known for her family's tragic association with the Titanic in 1912 and for her role in founding Harvard's Widener Library in 1915. This must-tell story for every tour guide to share with visitors and tourists arriving from all over the world has been widely circulated, but much less known was about Elkin Widener's role in launching a new institute for geographical exploration and the construction of 2 Divinity Avenue. Widener remarried with Rice in 1915, and the couple approached the American Geographical Society (AGS) with a proposal to make a donation to the AGS in return for which Rice would be named Director of the AGS.<sup>13</sup> This proposal was summarily rejected by the AGS. As a result, a seed was planted for a bitter personal feud over the following two decades between Rice and Bowman, the then incumbent AGS director.

Having been rejected by the AGS, Rice and Widener approached A. Lawrence Lowell (1856-1943), the President of Harvard University. President Lowell readily accepted their donation and stipulation, and a piece of land was promised in 1929 for a new building to house Rice's Institute for Geographical Exploration. 2 Divinity Avenue was constructed in 1930 by Horace Trumbauer, the same Philadelphia-based architecture company as the one Widener had suggested Harvard hire to design and build the Widener Library. Expressing Rice's passion for exploration in South America, the new Georgian Revival Style building stood out in Harvard's "Northern Wilderness" with its carving of a map of South

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<sup>13</sup> Isaiash Bowman served as Director of the American Geographical Society from 1915 to 1935.

America on the façade of the upper exterior of the building and of animals from the region on each side of the exterior walls.

With President Lowell's support, Alexander Hamilton Rice and Eleanor Elkins Widener fulfilled their ambition -- Rice became the inaugural Director of the Institute of Geographical Exploration and was also given a professorship at Harvard. Family wealth had brought him fame and the pride of being associated with Harvard, but he had yet to earn respect from his Harvard colleagues. Faculty in the Department of Geology and Geography disdained him, calling him "scoundrel" and regarding him as a "nuisance" and a fake geographer. Eminent faculty in geography such as Kirk Bryant and Derwent Whittlesey kept their distance from Rice and advised that the Department of Geology and Geography should have no involvement with the Institute of Geographical Exploration. Rice and his Institute were isolated from mainstream activities and scholars at Harvard. The tension further deepened when the Department of Geology and Geography conducted Edward Ackerman's tenure review in the late 1940s. Rice and his Institute became entangled with a controversy over both Ackerman as a scholar in human geography and geography as a university discipline at Harvard.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Geography as a discipline had operated under a cloud at Harvard, but after WWII, with the arrival of two of the brightest geographers of a new generation, along with the expansion in the postwar era, the future of geography at Harvard looked rosy, though encumbered with a lingering military focus carried over from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup> In the sub-field of human geography in the Division of Geology and Geography, there were three full-time faculty members – tenured professors Kirk Bryant and Derwent Whittlesey and Edward Ackerman, an Assistant Professor highly regarded as a rising star in the field. As the Department conducted its tenure review of Ackerman,

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<sup>14</sup> Neil Smith, "Academic War over the Field of Geography: The Elimination of Geography at Harvard, 1947-1951", *Annals of Association of American Geographers*, 77 (2), 1987, p. 157.

fundamental problems surfaced. The discussion grew so intense that the division started to seriously question the existence of Geography as a separate discipline at Harvard.

On the specific disciplinary and department history related to the Department of Geology and Geography, Neil Smith did a solid and thorough research and published a paper entitled “Academic War over the Field of Geography”. Smith concluded that Isaiah Bowman, a leading and influential figure in Geography in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, played a crucial and decisive role in dismantling the Geography unit as a discipline at Harvard. Sitting on the Board of Overseers of Harvard, Bowman had a close relationship with President Conant, a chemist by training, who held an unfavorable opinion towards Geography as an academic discipline. With further support from Provost Paul H. Buck (1899-1978), President Conant decided to discontinue the Department with the strong belief that geography should not be deemed as a university subject.

As a result, Human geography as a field and geography as a discipline disappeared from Harvard’s academic landscape from 1948 on, and Rice’s Institute of Geographical Exploration only existed in name. Three years after President Conant and Provost Buck impugned the existence of geography as a subject of university study and then dismantled the Department of Geography, Rice’s Institute was closed. In 1951, Rice left Harvard and retreated with his wife to their Miramar Mansion in Newport, Rhode Island. The building at 2 Divinity Avenue was left vacant.

### **Relocation of the Harvard-Yenching Institute**

Meanwhile, back in Harvard Yard, although Boylston Hall went through several renovations and expansions, its outer walls of Rockport granite exterior remained. In early 1949, the interior was subject to renovation when the collection for undergraduates from the History Department was relocated to Widener Library and the newly built Lamont Library. Additional space was made available for the Chinese and Japanese Library of the Harvard-Yenching Institute to use for its expanding collection.

During the post-WWII years American higher education and universities were going through fundamental changes and rapid expansion. Harvard was no exception. In the midst of unprecedented development and transformation, East Asian Studies at Harvard ushered in a new era. There was an increasing demand not only for significant expansion of courses in East Asian Studies, but also for library collections in East Asian languages on traditional subjects as well as contemporary East Asian issues and problems. The basement and the first floor of Boylston Hall became increasingly cluttered with the steady acquisition of new publications and old rare materials. At the same time, the amenities and facilities at Boylston Hall could not keep up with the demands of the ever-expanding collection. The Harvard-Yenching Institute and its Chinese and Japanese Library faced a number challenges as far as space and facilities were concerned. These were presented to the Board of Trustees of the Harvard-Yenching Institute on multiple occasions with increasing seriousness and intensified urgency.

Firstly, space for the Chinese and Japanese collection was running out. After WWII, a large number of books had been acquired from China. For instance, Francis W. Cleaves was able to collect more than 5000 books from the Japanese who were leaving Tianjin on the eve of the war. In addition, he himself collected rare Manchu and Mongolian books and manuscripts during his research stay in China under the auspice of the Harvard-Yenching Institute's fellowship.

Secondly, Boylston Hall was no longer fit to house a library, especially for the Chinese and Japanese Library of the Harvard-Yenching Institute that held many uniquely available rare books and materials. There was neither temperature control nor amenities to allay damage from flooding or other natural disasters.

Thirdly, East Asian Studies at Harvard had expanded with new programs for East Asian scholars and a rapidly increasing number of new courses available to Harvard students. In addition to continuing to provide financial support to faculty members in Asian Studies and to the Chinese and Japanese

Library, the Harvard-Yenching Institute started a new visiting scholars program in 1954 to further carry out its mission to “promote both in China and America graduate study and research in the various branches of Chinese culture, with the primary objective of encouraging the Chinese to study their own highly developed civilization in the light of occidental methods of research and to interpret this civilization to the West.”<sup>15</sup>

All these challenges prompted the HYI Board of Trustees as well as the Librarian of Harvard University and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, to consider relocating the Institute and its library to a more spacious and better equipped place. Dean McGeorge Bundy initially suggested Gray Herbarium at Garden Street as a new home for the HYI and its Library, but Serge Elisseéff, Director of the HYI, considered it too far from the Harvard Yard.<sup>16</sup> At the HYI Board meeting in the fall of 1954, Dean Bundy officially put forward a proposal that the Harvard-Yenching Institute be relocated from Boylston Hall to 2 Divinity Avenue, the building formerly occupied by the Institute of Geographical Exploration. He shared with the Board members that when he had inspected the premises in the spring, Director Elisseéff considered the space inadequate to meet the needs of the Institute, but he “expressed the opinion that the building might be made suitable if a wing were added.”<sup>17</sup>

Dean Bundy’s proposal and Director Elisseéff’s suggestion were not implemented until the fall, 1956 when fire and water damage occurred to the HYI and its library inside Boylston Hall. At the HYI

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<sup>15</sup> “Newly Formed Harvard Institute at Yenching”, *The Harvard Crimson* (January 10, 1928). Quoted in Elizabeth J. Perry and Hang Tu, “Cultural Imperialism Redux? Reassessing the Christian Colleges of Republican China.” In *China and the World – The World and China – A Transcultural Perspective, Vol. 3* (Joachim Gentz, Natascha Gentz, Barbara Mittler, and Catherine Vance Yeh, eds.). Heidelberg: OSTASIEN Verlag, 2019, p. 77.

<sup>16</sup> Until the 1950s, all but the Arnold Arboretum herbarium, which was located in the Jamaica Plain section of Boston, were housed separately in Cambridge. The Gray Herbarium was on Garden Street, within the Botanical Gardens, but blocks from the other biology collections. The Farlow Herbarium was adjacent to the Biological Laboratories on Divinity Avenue and the Botanical Museum was in the Museum of Comparative Zoology building. The herbarium of the New England Botanical Club, although housed at the Gray Herbarium, was a separate unit. Upon construction of a new herbarium building on Divinity Avenue in 1954, the collections of the Gray Herbarium and Arnold Arboretum (except for cultivated plants of the Arnold Arboretum, which remained in Jamaica Plain) were brought together and integrated. The Arnold, Gray, Farlow and the Botanical Museum herbaria were thus close at hand. The website on Harvard University Herbaria and Libraries: <<https://huh.harvard.edu/pages/history>>

<sup>17</sup> The Board Meeting Minutes of the Harvard-Yenching Institute, November 13, 1956, p.352.

Board meeting on November 13, 1956, Trustee members unanimously agreed that “a move to more adequate and, particularly for the priceless and irreplaceable Chinese-Japanese Library, safer quarters are imperative.” Director Elisseéff reported to the Board that “the unsuitability of Boylston Hall was recently highlighted again, first by a possible case of attempted incendiarism and later by the flooding of the rare books room to a depth of three or four inches.” And “the Director also stated that under the Institute's present and prospective programs the library was likely to become an even more important part of the Institute's work than it has been in the past, making a larger and more direct contribution to education in Asia. For these reasons, a move to new quarters was deemed by all present to be essential.”<sup>18</sup> With the plan for relocating the HYI and its library confirmed, an expansion and renovation plan was worked out between the HYI Board and FAS for the following two years.

The architectural firm of Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson & Abbot was hired to take up the new construction project for the former building of the Institute for Geographical Exploration. In 1957, a new wing with four floors was added as an extension from the original construction to house the Chinese and Japanese collection. And a new auditorium, named Yenching Auditorium, was annexed to the rear of the first floor, spacious enough to accommodate 275 seats. As Bainbridge Bunting points out, “when the building was enlarged to house the Harvard-Yenching Institute, a satisfactory addition at the rear by Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson and Abbot, conforming in scale and material to both the original unit and the adjacent Semitic Museum, did much to alleviate this visual disparity.”<sup>19</sup>

In the fall of 1958, the Harvard-Yenching Institute moved into the renovated building along with its growing collection of Chinese and Japanese materials. A map room remained as the only legacy at 2 Divinity from Rice's Institute, while the building now provided individual offices for each faculty member of the Department of Far Eastern Languages and visiting scholars of the Institute. It was expected that

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<sup>18</sup> The Board Meeting Minutes of the Harvard-Yenching Institute, November 13, 1956, pp. 455.

<sup>19</sup> Bainbridge Bunting, *Harvard: An architectural history*. Harvard University Press, 1985, p168.

the Yenching Library would have sufficient space for the next fifteen to twenty years. In addition, the building had enough extra space to allow the newly established Department of Statistics to move into the fourth floor of the extended wing, although the Department moved out in 1972 when the Library required additional space for its ever-expanding collection. With 2 Divinity Avenue as its new home, the Harvard-Yenching Institute and its Library enjoyed spacious quarters for teaching, research and academic activities.

In 1962, the Starr family donated to the HYI two stone lions originally from Beijing which became a trademark of the building and a symbol of East Asian Studies at Harvard ever since.<sup>20</sup> In the past half century, faculty, students and scholars in East Asian Studies have regarded the two stone lions as closely identified with their building and field of study, while the carvings that symbolized South America on the façade and exterior walls of the building faded into history. In 1998, Bradford H. Washburn, one of Rice's students who had served as Associate Director for the Institute and later as Director of the Museum of Science in Boston, brought the memory of Rice's Institute back to 2 Divinity Avenue by way of a ceremony with a plaque which reads "Alexander Hamilton Rice, AB 1898 and MD 1903 whose generosity created this building and sustained the Institute of Geographical Exploration, 1930-1951. Within these walls, he and his colleagues laid the foundations for the mapping of the world from the air."<sup>21</sup> Washburn also arranged to have the following statements carved on the left and right sides of the wall, respectively: "Publicity, press and politics are methods of self-exploitation and the commercialization of science", and on the right "Purpose, patience, perseverance are factors of successful geographical exploration and scientific explanation". However, these emblems seem to be neglected by students and faculty of East Asian Studies either because of the scandalous nature of the

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<sup>20</sup> Smithsonian Institute Archives link, <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/polly-thayer-starr-papers-6141>.

<sup>21</sup> "A Nod to Ham Rice", in *Harvard Magazine*, March-April, 1999.

inception of the Institute of Geographical Exploration or due to lack of interest in Alexander Hamilton Rice.

As East Asian Studies continued to expand its teaching and research scope after the Harvard-Yenching Library moved to 2 Divinity, and the Library's 1.6 million collection became the largest among research university East Asian libraries in North America, nearly half of the Library books must now be stored in an off-site depository. In recent years, faculty and students of East Asian studies have petitioned for a new complex hoping for a new home for the ever-expanding courses, research activities and vibrant academic events in Asian Studies at Harvard.

The flourishing of Asian Studies stands in stark contrast to the ill-fated field of geography, human geography in particular, abolished as a discipline of study by the university leadership in the late 1940s. Even after this "terrible blow" to American geography,<sup>22</sup> a few other universities tried to build the discipline and develop the field, but in the end, many of them followed in Harvard's footsteps and decided to close down their departments. In the 1980s, some scholars appealed to Harvard to revive Geography as a university subject, but these appeals were rejected. After 1948, Geography disappeared from the academic landscape not only at Harvard, but also from many other universities in North America, and even around the world.

After the Harvard-Yenching Institute moved out in 1958, Boylston went through yet another major renovation. The designer this time even planned to make an overhaul change to the granite exterior, but a stipulation in the Boylston will stated that Harvard would continue to receive the income from its bequest only as long as the walls of Boylston Hall stood. Upon the completion of the renovation in late 1950s, Boylston became the home for the Departments of Classics, Gender and Women Studies, Linguistics, and Romance Languages. No trace of East Asian Studies remains except for the stele still

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<sup>22</sup> Neil Smith, "Academic War over the Field of Geography": The Elimination of Geography at Harvard, 1947-1951, *Annals of Association of American Geographers*, 77 (2), 1987, p. 162.



right outside in the open space next to the western exterior wall of Widener Library. The stele alone stands as a historical symbol of the connection between Boylston Hall and the Harvard-Yenching Institute and the genesis and expansion of East Asian Studies at Harvard.

The two Harvard buildings of Boylston Hall and 2 Divinity Avenue may appear to have little in common yet both are closely associated with the history of the Harvard-Yenching Institute and East Asian Studies. Over the years the two buildings have gone through drastic changes in academic disciplines and architectural design, with each transformation illuminating the intertwined connections between architectural development and disciplinary evolution at Harvard. As Architect Jean Nouvel noted, “Each new situation requires a new architecture”; or, as Mies van der Rohe put it, “Architecture is the will of an epoch translated into space”. The construction, renovation and expansion of a building on a university campus is inseparable from the ebb and flow of disciplinary evolution -- the origin, rise and maturity as well as disappearance of academic subjects and disciplines. The relocation of the Harvard-Yenching Institute, the transformations of Boylston Hall and geography’s demise are all end results of complex interactions and the inextricable entanglement of university bureaucratic institutions, academic disciplines, and social and intellectual networks and proclivities of faculty, scholars and administrators.