

RESOURCES FOR STUDYING CJK LITERATURE

Periods

Before diving in to literature, one must first choose a period. In each country, periods demark whole communities of studies and scholars. The biggest division is between “classical” and “modern,” but within the former there are many sub-divisions. “Classical” indicates most importantly a difference in language, but also a difference in focus.

Genres

Specific genres differ from one language’s literature to the next. In Japanese literature, the main genres are: drama (e.g., kabuki 歌舞伎 and noh 能), poetry (both Japanese 和歌 and Chinese 漢詩), histories (e.g., Kojiki 古事記 and Nihon shoki 日本書紀), diaries and travel accounts 日記 文学・紀行文学, monogatari 物語 and setsuwa 說話, and essays/miscellany 隨筆.

In Chinese literature, the main genres are: drama (e.g., *zájù* 雜劇; *nánxì* 南戲; and *píhuáng* 皮黃), fiction (*xiǎoshuō* 小說), poetry (*shī* 詩), prose (*cǎnwén* 散文) and rhetoric (*wénlún* 文論 or *shīlún* 詩論). Rhetoric is a modern genre, although what is included in it is not necessarily modern.

In Korean literature, the main genres are: poetry (e.g., *saenaennorae* 詞腦歌, *changga* 長歌, *sijo* 時調), song verses (*kasa* 歌辭), eulogies (*akchang* 樂章), fiction in Chinese, fiction in Korean, and drama.

Collections/Resources

English language bibliographies

CJK literature is still a much-ignored world outside of East Asia. The amount of material translated is paltry compared to what there is extant. For your purposes, knowing about both English translations AND CJK resources is useful.

Translations are often hard to find for many reasons: they are published in journals, or they are published as chapters of books, or their English titles are totally different from their original titles (e.g., 水滸傳 became *Outlaws of the Marsh* and 細雪 became *The Makioka Sisters*). Before the days of JSTOR and BAS online, scholars compiled regular bibliographies of translations, some of which we have in the library. They are:

Title: Modern Japanese literature in translation a
bibliography /
Author: Kokusai Bunka Kaikan (Tokyo, Japan). Toshoshitsu.
Publisher: 1979. Kodansha International distributed by Harper
& Row,

Title: A bibliography of studies and translations of modern
Chinese literature, 1918-1942,
Author: Gibbs, Donald A., 1931-
Publisher: 1975. East Asian Research Center, Harvard Universit
distributed by Harvard University Press,

Unfortunately, we have no separate bibliography of Korean literature, although some of the Korean literary surveys have bibliographies in the back.

One resource often omitted in these bibliographies is **sourcebooks**. Some of these are listed on the [course bibliography](#), but there are others. Do not discount the handy nature of sourcebooks! For example, Wm. Theodore DeBary's *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, and *Sources of Korean Tradition* contain very readable excerpts of many classics, such as the *Analects* 論語 and the *Kojiki* 古事記.

English “companions”

These books, part encyclopedia and part dictionary, are excellent reference resources:

Princeton Companion to Classical Japanese Literature by Earl Miner

Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature by William H. Nienhauser

English Surveys

For quick, ready reference, there are a few useful English language sources:

Japanese

By Donald Keene, there are: *Seeds in the Heart*, *World Within Walls*, and *Dawn to the West*. Although no book is fully comprehensive, these books cover much of Japanese literature and are very readable. Their indexes are also very good. If you can't find what you're looking for in these, try the *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan* as a starting point.

Chinese

The Columbia History of Traditional Chinese Literature by Victor Mair is very useful.

Korean

A Guide to Korean Literature by In-sob Zong and *Korean Literature: Topics and Themes* by Peter H. Lee (both on reserve) are helpful quick references. The latter includes extensive bibliographies.

Biographical Information about Authors

The following works in English are in our library:

- *Who's Who in Korean Literature* by Han'guk Munhwa Yesul Chinhungwon
- *Medieval Japanese Writers* by Stephen D. Carter
- *Biographical Dictionary of Japanese Literature* by Sen'ichi Hisamatsu

Although I know you will snicker and snort when you read this, it has to be said: at some point you will have to take that big step outside of English language sources and turn to CJK sources. If you do not, you are researching with blinders on.

Anthologies/compendia

One never reads anthologies cover to cover, but one uses them often. And they exist in abundance in CJK literature!

Japan

Let's say that you were reading an English translation of the *Tale of Genji* and, in a fit of masochistic academic curiosity, you wanted to see what the original text looked like. In our library, there are two copies and they are both in compendia. Typically, compendia in Japanese are called *zenshū* 全集 or *taikei* 体系, although sometimes they are called *sōsho* 叢書 or *senshū* 選集. Our two collections are entitled *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 日本古典文学全集 and *Nihon koten bungaku taikai* 日本古典文学体系 (This one has two index volumes). Each one has a separate volume dedicated to an author, a work, or a genre. Classical compendia often have copious footnotes and explanatory text—sometimes they even have a modern Japanese translation of the text.

Likewise, modern literature is often collected in compendia that dedicate each volume to one author. The collection/series we have in the library is called *Shinchō Nihon bungaku* 新潮日本文学, after the publishing company Shinchō that produces it.

If you have a classical and a modern compendium, chances are you have much of what you'd ever want—especially at the undergraduate level. One can get more specific and find compendia of all one author's works (e.g. 夏目漱石全集), or all the works of the Meiji period (e.g. 明治文学全集), etc.

China

Chinese literature likewise has compendia; the terms to be familiar with are *zōngjí* 總集, *biéjì* 別集, *wénjí* 文集, and *quánjí* 全集. However, Chinese generally do not publish the sorts of wide compendia that the Japanese do (see above). For works up until the 18th century, the compendium to look at is the *Sìkù quánshū* 四庫全書, which contains 3,460 works. Our library has online access to this collection! In hard copy, we also have three very useful compendia: *Sì bù cóng kān* 四部叢刊, *Sì bù bèi yào* 四部備要, and *Cóng shū jí chéng* 叢書集成. The first two have index volumes.

For a guide to literary anthologies and collected works, consult chapter 30 of Wilkinson's *Manual*. For modern works, consult specific compendia and/or collections in the library.

Korea

Korean literature also has compendia. Our library does not have any of these, but two examples (owned by, among others, Harvard) are 韓國古典文學全集 *Han'guk kojon munhak chonjip* and 韓國現代文學全集 *Han'guk hyondae munhak chonjip*.

N.B.: Many collections are catalogued *all under the same title*, which makes finding individual works in them difficult at best. This is why collections with **index volumes** are the best ones.

Dictionaries/Reference works

Not surprisingly, native speakers of CJK compile the best dictionaries on national literatures. It may seem daunting to look up an entry in CJK, but the wealth of information you'll find there is worth it.

Japan

- *Nihon koten bungaku daijiten* 日本古典文学大辞典: this lists authors, works, and literary terms for classical (i.e., until 1868) literature.
- *Nihon kindai bungaku daijiten* 日本近代文学大辞典: this lists authors, works, and literary terms for modern authors (i.e. 1868-present, more or less). Entries include bibliographic material.

China

- *Zhōngguó gǔ dài wén xué jiā cí diǎn* 中國古代文學家辭典 : this lists authors of classical Chinese literature from the Qin to the Sui.
- *Zhōngguó wén xué jiā dà cí diǎn* 中國文學家大辭典: this is a general source for information on Chinese authors
- *Xiàn dài Zhōngguó wén xué jiā zhuàn jì* 現代中國文學家傳記 : this provides biographical information on modern (20th century) authors.

Korea

- *Han 'guk munye sajon* 韓國文藝事典 (Not in our library)
- *Munye taesajon* 文藝大辭典 (Not in our library)

Online Texts

Increasingly, CJK texts are being digitized, which means life has become easier. Digitization makes searches fast and convenient! Often, you can search for a specific word, or phrase, or set of words across hundreds of texts at once. Internet sites appear on an almost daily basis, but here are resources that are particularly good:

- [Duke Univ. Library's list of Electronic Texts in Japanese](#)
- [World Wide Web Virtual Library page of links on Chinese Literature](#)
- In theory, the [Korean National Library](#) website offers online search of hundred thousands of Korean books and dissertations. Access to abstracts of dissertations submitted since 1995, and full-text articles from Korean journals as well as texts of Korean classics (at the moment 50 books) downloaded (as graphics ".tif" files). Korean language interface. Unfortunately, their web site is not entirely reliable or user friendly.