

Introducing the Robert Charles Lee Canada-Hong Kong Library
of the University of Toronto (多倫多大學利銘澤典藏)

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When I last went to Toronto in December 2025, to pay my last respects to my dear friend Wong Hin Shing ('61 Grad), I made friends with Dr. Maria L. C. Lau (劉麗芝) through Mrs Gloria Man, widow of the late Man Sai Cheong, a notable Hong Kong Torontonian. Dr. Lau worked in the library of the University of Toronto. Her division is called the Robert Charles Lee Candad-Hong Kong Library (多倫多大學利銘澤典藏)(藏 means royal library in the old days.). Its address is Roberts Library 8th floor, University of Toronto, 130 St. George Street, Toronto, ON M5S 1A5.

Intrigued by the name, I paid her a visit and learned about the nature and aims of this unique unit of the university library. ([Photo 1](#))

I learned that the division was established in 2008 based on an earlier collection of Hong Kong materials started off by Dr Luk Hung Kee (陸鴻基) formerly of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and another academic. Dr Vivienne Poy (利德蕙), daughter of Dr Robert Charles Lee and a Senator of Canada from 1998-2012, created an endowment fund the interest of which provides the library with some staffing support. The library also gets a share of funds from the university for acquisition and upkeep. But it has to undertake fund raising as a means of enabling the library to fulfil its functions. It now boasts of the largest collection of Hong Kong books and materials outside of Hong Kong. Its primary aim is for research into Hong Kong subjects. One of its ambitions is to digitize as much material as possible for world-wide research use. One recent example is that because of the digitalization of a well known cartoon series done in Hong Kong, a German academic can access the cartoons without leaving his country. Dr Lau has made special efforts to obtain histories of Hong Kong schools, school textbooks, Cantonese and HK literature, and Hong Kong-Canadian materials.

I was impressed by the aims of the library. In response, I donated our centenary history, A Centenary Journey with Youth for a Hope-Filled Future, Wah Yan College, Kowloon, 1924-2024, a gift to me by Mr Chiu Hei Kaw, my classmate and retired biology teacher of WYK. I also passed to the library a disk containing The Shield 1951-2002, which was given to me by Mr Anthony Ho. ([Photo 2](#)). In addition, a relative of mine who gave me his entire treasure of Hong Kong first-day covers from 1991-2024, agreed to pass them all onto the library,

together with my collection of Canadian first-day covers and stamps. They total over 200, and make up a panorama of life in Hong Kong and Canada. During this Chinese New Year in February 2026, an exhibition of the Chinese animals zodiac first-day covers, from both Hong Kong and Canada, was put on for admiring spectators. ([Photos 3](#) and [4](#)) The donors were gratefully and neatly acknowledged ([Photo 5](#)). Besides being a library with a special Chinese feel to it, it also serves the functions of venue for displays, public talks and research cafes where the academics of the University of Toronto, other scholars and the public interact. ([Photos 6](#) and [7](#)).

The library welcomes visitors. Those who would like to go as a group can email Dr Lau through chk.library@utoronto.ca It opens Monday to Friday, 12-5 p.m.

The following shows a YouTube interview with Dr Lau. ([Photo 8](#))