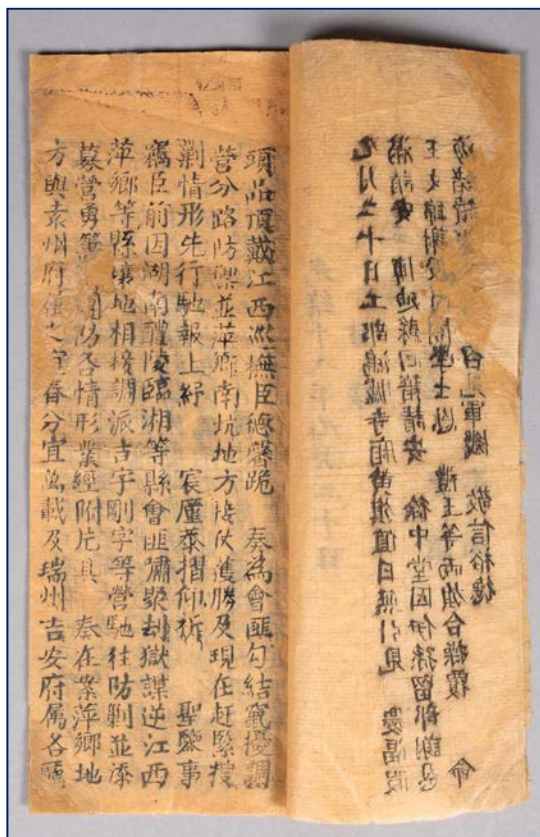




Art Conservation *and historical newspapers*

The slight, 9" x 3.7" booklet bears little resemblance to newspapers more familiar to western eyes. Less than .02 inches thick, this edition of the *Peking Gazette* is printed on seven lightweight sheets of bamboo paper between front and back bamboo paper covers, all bound together on the right-hand side with two paper twists, or “nails,” and four pinholes. But the *Gazette*, which was usually printed weekly, contains news as important during the final years of China’s Qing dynasty (1636-1912) as any news today.



This edition of the *Gazette* is inscribed “Nov 1892,” and it would have been read by anyone interested in the activities of the emperor and his court, including both the Chinese and the many foreigners in the country at that time. Now a treatment project for WUDPAC Fellow and paper major Tammy Hong, the booklet belongs to the Penn Museum (acc. no. A1830) and is inscribed with the name of its donor, Charles D. Hart. A third inscription reads “Peking gazette” and is, like the others, written in brown ink and in opposite orientation to the Chinese text.

The fragile booklet is in poor condition overall, and Tammy’s goal is to stabilize it so that it can be handled safely by researchers. She found that the bamboo papers and covers are brittle, with losses, creases, wrinkles, and folds throughout. One of the paper nails is lost, and the other is loose, while a brown, sticky substance has created a dark stain that binds together the second and third pages – the table of contents and the court’s official note – so they cannot be opened at all.

After cleaning the *Gazette*’s surfaces with soft brushes, Tammy will first work to stabilize the fragile paper by mending losses and tears with adhesive-coated paper activated with ethanol. To further reinforce the

booklet’s structure, she will replace the missing paper nail and tighten and reuse the loose paper nail that remains. She will also work with a small spatula and ethanol in local areas of the adhered pages. She hopes this will reduce the stain and allow the pages to release themselves. When Tammy’s treatment is complete and the *Peking Gazette* is returned to the Penn Museum, its news will once again be available to anyone interested in the happenings of November 1892 during China’s Qing Dynasty.



ARTC Spotlight—March 2023

The University of Delaware’s Art Conservation Department educates and trains professional conservators who are well versed in the treatment, analysis, documentation, and preventive conservation of individual artifact and archive collections. For more news about our students and other department activities visit our web site at www.artcons.udel.edu.

Top and above: Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation Fellow Tammy Hong examining and testing the solubility of the gazette media under the microscope. Left: A page from the gazette post treatment under normal illumination. This edition of the gazette is printed on lightweight sheets of bamboo paper with bamboo paper covers, bound with paper “nails.” (Images: E. Krape and T. Hong.)