

Suggestions for Handling Chinese Materials in American College and University Libraries

CHINESE LIBRARIANS have benefited by library techniques developed in the United States. It may be that the time is near at hand when the library profession in China will be able to offer some contribution in return. The increasing numbers of books in the Chinese language that are being made available to the growing number of students of the Chinese language and culture in many institutions in the United States are bringing some problems to college and university libraries. Toward the solution of difficulties in acquiring, processing, and using Chinese materials, the following suggestions may provide a basis for discussion and action.

Few libraries in the United States are in a position now to add to their staffs a specialist in Chinese language and literature who has library training. Those Americans who have studied the language and subject matter seem unwilling to enter library service so long as the rewards are generally less than teaching and research. Chinese students who come to the United States are not able to stay long enough to give

the advantages of continuity of service in a Chinese collection and are not able to establish themselves in the profession in this country for various reasons. Therefore, the organization and development of a collection of Chinese language material are likely to present difficulties to all except the largest university libraries in this country. However, cooperation between libraries in the United States and librarians in China could make possible the purchasing, processing, and use of Chinese language materials by trained assistants with some language and subject knowledge, teamed with Chinese students working on a part-time basis.

The A.L.A. Cooperative Purchasing Program in China has furnished a beginning for such international cooperation. If a single responsible agent in China under the supervision of an organization such as the Library Association of China were empowered to act for an association of libraries in the United States, the funds that could be made available might be invested to better advantage than if each library purchased materials independently in China. Costs of acquisition would be reduced because of lower operating expenses, and there would be less likelihood of physical imperfections in material sent to American libraries. If the libraries cooperating in such a program would agree among themselves on some division of fields of special-

¹ Before accepting an exchange assistantship in 1942 in the Chinese-Japanese library of the Harvard-Yenching Institute at Cambridge, the writer was on the staff of the Yenching Library in Peiping, first as a general assistant in the administrative office and later as assistant librarian. Then, after a year of study at the School of Library Service, Columbia University, he was engaged to classify the Chinese collection of the libraries. It is from an understanding of the large library (about 200,000 *ts'ü* or approximately 25,000 volumes) that this article is written, but the suggestions offered are applicable to a collection of any size.

ization, the economies accruing from lower prices of books purchased would be obvious. Competitive bidding and the dealers' practice of sending incomplete parts of one scarce set to several libraries or distributing imperfect copies would be avoided if a single agent were responsible. If more than one library wished to have a scarce item, an agreement could be reached before purchase as to its most useful location, and reproduction by microfilm, or interlibrary loan, might solve problems of use.

Cooperation through the agent could be extended to cataloging and classification of materials before shipment. The processing could be done by a trained technical staff under the supervision of a professional organization such as the Library Association of China, if the cooperating libraries in the United States could agree on a single classification and on a single form for the catalog card.²

Harvard-Yenching Classification Schedule

The Harvard-Yenching classification developed by Dr. A. K. Ch'iu for the Chinese-Japanese library of Harvard-Yenching Institute is probably the best now available, because it was evolved for an actual collection of books. It has proved its usefulness in a large library covering all subject fields, it is bilingual, and it has been published. No classification schedule will be found perfect under all conditions, but the Harvard-Yenching classification has practical value and can be used for books in various languages about China, as well as for books in the Chinese language. Such well-known and favored classifications as the Dewey decimal and the Library of Congress schedules are likely to be found inadequate in the fields of Chinese literature, classics,

² A short list of reference works is appended for the use of staff members proficient in Chinese but without cataloging experience who might be called upon to process uncataloged Chinese collections now in libraries in the United States.

philosophy, history, and geography. The Harvard-Yenching classification is now being used in the Chinese library of the University of Chicago, as well as in the Chinese collection of Columbia University, and is being considered for use in other Chinese collections in this country. The printed cards issued by the Harvard-Yenching Library bear the classification number, and that fact as well as the growing universality of the classification are arguments in its favor.

If the usefulness of the printed Harvard-Yenching cards is limited because of the variation from standard cataloging forms used in this country, an agreement might be reached with the agent for production of manuscript or mimeographed cards according to a specified form. The Harvard-Yenching printed cards represent such high standards of accuracy and quality, however, that libraries in the United States might well consider adoption of the same form. In addition, the transliteration or Romanization used on the Harvard-Yenching cards is the Wade-Giles system for Romanization of the national language (*kuo-yü*) which simplifies filing problems.

Catalog cards for Chinese materials may be filed in any one of several ways, such as by number of strokes in a character, by the four-corner system, or by one of many other methods arbitrarily representing position and direction of component strokes of a character by Arabic numerals. The Chinese collection of Columbia University files catalog cards by the Wade-Giles system of Romanization because it is the system most generally taught students of the Chinese language in the United States and presumably would be more easily used by them and by faculty members of the various colleges and universities in this country than the so-called numeral systems, or the slower and more difficult system of filing

by number of strokes.

Subject approach to the books in the library would be by arrangement on the shelves and through a classified catalog. A dictionary catalog would not be possible at the present time because a list of subject headings adequate for Chinese publications is not available. If the shelflist is used as a classed catalog, analytics could be made on colored cards. Guide cards could be made by using the main divisions and sub-headings of the Harvard-Yenching classification as a guide.

A practice that has been followed in China permits binding together two or more works dealing with absolutely unrelated topics. A library that receives such a *mélange* will find it necessary to make sure that each item is separately cataloged. If a subject catalog for the collection is not being maintained, the usefulness of the contents of the binding will be limited unless they can be promptly rebound to permit shelving of each part with other books on the same subject.

Use of a Chinese library that does not have a subject specialist with training in library techniques and adequate knowledge of the language presents problems that can be met with the cooperation of students and faculty members if the library is intended only for their use. However, unless the finding list is complete, the author and title entries are adequate and accurate and properly filed, and some approach by subject is available, the use of the collection will be on a level much lower than its potentialities. If the library is intended for the use of research workers, whether faculty members or members of special research projects, or if it attempts to aid museums, publishers, and the general public, a specialist would be a necessity. If one library is

not in a position to add a well-qualified person to its staff, financial cooperation by several institutions or projects needing service might be possible. Contributions might take the form of books or services, if funds were not available.

Chinese Union Catalog Needed

A union catalog of all Chinese language material in libraries in the United States is needed by all Chinese libraries as much as is the highly efficient and successful union catalog at the Library of Congress. Dr. Ch'iu has suggested that it is as possible to file cards for Chinese titles in the union catalog of the Library of Congress as it is to file cards for French or Russian titles, provided the Romanization is on the card and provided all libraries in the country follow the same system of Romanization when supplying titles or requesting information. Fundamentally, there is no more reason for excluding Chinese language material than there is for excluding material in any other language.

Further cooperation between Chinese libraries in the United States to aid scholarly research and increase the usefulness of collections of limited size and staff might include a union list of reprints in book form; publication of a list of acquisitions of all libraries at regular intervals, locating copies of all titles; and publication of selected lists of acquisitions in their fields by libraries specializing in limited areas. The circulation of lists of duplicates by the various libraries would facilitate development by purchase and exchange. Cooperation between larger libraries in the United States and China might include exchange of staff members, for study of library practices and for purposes of research aggressive action is needed.

A Selected List of Reference Works for Cataloging

I. Names and dates

a. For deceased persons

1. The card catalog

2. Fang, I. [and others], comp.

Chung kuo jên ming ta tz'ü tien. [A Chinese biographical dictionary] Shanghai, China, Commercial press, 1934.

— Index. 1934.

3. Harvard-Yenching institute. Sinological index series.

Ssü shih ch'i chung sung tai chuan chi tsung ho yin tê. [Combined indices to forty-seven collections of Sung dynasty biographies] Peiping, China, Yenching university, 1939.

4. Harvard-Yenching institute. Sinological index series.

Liao chin yün chuan chi tsung ho yin tê. [Combined indices to thirty collections of Liao, Chin, and Yuan biographies] Peiping, China, Yenching university, 1940.

5. Harvard-Yenching institute. Sinological index series.

Pa shih chiu chung ming tai chuan chi tsung ho yin tê. [Combined indices to eighty-nine collections of Ming dynasty biographies] Peiping, China, Yenching university, 1935.

6. Harvard-Yenching institute. Sinological index series.

San shih san chung ch'ing tai chuan chi tsung ho yin te. [Index to thirty-three collections of Ch'ing dynasty biographies] Peiping, China, Yenching university, 1932.

7. Liang, T'ing-ts'an, comp.

Li tai ming jên shêng tsu nien piao. [Table of birth and death dates of eminent Chinese of all dynasties] Shanghai, China, Commercial press, 1933.

8. U.S. Library of Congress. Oriental division.

. . . Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing period (1644-1912), edited by Arthur W. Hummel. Washington, U.S. Government printing office, 1943-44. 2v.

b. For living persons

1. Hashikawa, Tokio, comp.

Chung kuo wen hua chieh jen wu tsung chien. [A biographical dictionary of Chinese in cultural field] Peiping, China, Chung hua fa ling pien yin kuan, 1940.

2. Who's who in China, 1st—1925—

Shanghai, China, China weekly review, 1925-

c. For persons with posthumous names

1. Ch'ên, Nai-ch'ien, comp.

Pieh hao so yin. [Index to pen names] Shanghai, China, K'ai ming bookstore, 1936.

2. Ch'ên, Tê-yün, comp.

Ku chin jên wu pien ming so yin. [An index to nicknames, pen names, and other kinds of personal names of distinguished Chinese, ancient and modern] Canton, China, Lingnan university, 1937.

3. Yün, Yung-chin, comp.

Hsien tai chung kuo tso chia pi ming lu. [A list of pen names of modern Chinese writers] Peiping, China, Chinese library association, 1936.

II. Titles and editions

a. For old books

1. For general reference

i. Chi, Yün [and others], comp.

Ssü ku ch'üan shu tsung mu t'i yao. [A descriptive catalog of the Imperial library at Peking compiled between 1773 and 1782] Shanghai, China, Commercial press, 1934. 4v.

ii. Fan, Hsi-tseng, rev.

Shu mu ta wen pu cheng. [A selected bibliography of Chinese books compiled by Chang Chih-tung in 1870, revised and enlarged] Nanking, China, Kuo hsüeh t'u shu kuan, 1931.

iii. Liu, I-chêng [and others], comp.

Chiang su shêng li kuo hsüeh t'u shu kuan ts'ang shu tsung mu. [Catalog of the Kiangsu provincial library in Nanking] Nanking, China, Kuo hsüeh t'u shu kuan, 1933-35. 24 ts'e. — Supplement. Nanking, China, 1936. 6 ts'e.

iv. Pei-ching-jên-wên-k'o-hsüeh-yen-chiu-so.

Pei ching jen wen k'o hseuh yen chiu so ts'ang shu mu lu. [Catalog of Chinese collection in the humanity and science research institute] Peiping, China, Pei ching jen wen k'o hseuh yen chiu so, 1940. 8 ts'e. — Supplement. Peiping, China. 2 ts'e.

2. For identification of editions

i. Shao, I-ch'ên, comp.

Ssü k'u chien ming mu lu piao chu. [Bibliography of editions of books listed in the abridged catalog of the

- Imperial library at Peking] Hangchow, China, The author's family, 1911.
- ii. Mo, Yu-chih, comp.
Lü t'ing chih chien ch'uan pên shu mu. [A bibliography of editions of books seen or heard] Shanghai, China, Shao yeh shan fang, 1923. 8 ts'e.
3. For ts'ung shu or collection of works
- i. Shih, T'ing-yung, comp.
Ts'ung shu tzu mu shu ming so yin. [Title index to 40,000 works contained in 1275 ts'ung shu preserved in the National Ts'ing Hua University] Peiping, China, Tsing hua university, 1936.
- ii. Yang, Chia-lo, comp.
Ts'ung shu ta tz'ü tien. [Combined dictionary of 6000 titles of ts'ung shu followed by a list of individual works included in author analytics and title analytics arranged by four-corner system] Nanking, China, Ts'ung shu ta tz'ü tien kuan, 1936.
- b. For current books
- i. Quarterly bulletin of Chinese bibliography. English edition. v. 1-4, 1934-37. New series. v. 1- 1940- Peiping, China, National library of Peiping, 1934-
- ii. T'u shu chi k'an, quarterly bulletin of Chinese bibliography. Chinese edition. v. 1-4, 1934-37. New series, v. 1- 1940- Peiping, China, National library of Peiping, 1934-
- III. Chinese dates into western calendar
1. Ch'ên, Ch'ing-ch'i, comp.
Chung kuo ta shih nien piao. [A chronological table of important events in China] Shanghai, China, Commercial press, 1934.
2. Hsieh, Chung-san [and Ouyang, 1], comp.
Liang ch'ien nien chung hsi li tui chao piao. [Sino-western calendar for two thousand years, 1-2000 A.D.] Shanghai, China, Commercial press, 1940.
- IV. Dictionary
1. Chang, Yü-shu, comp.
K'ang hsi tzu tien. [Standard Chinese dictionary compiled to the imperial order in 1710] Shanghai, China, Commercial press, 1937.
2. Lu, Êrh-k'uei [and others], comp.
Tz'ü yuan. [Chinese phrase dictionary] 20th ed., Shanghai, China, Commercial press, 1935. 2v. ————Supplement. 1933.
- V. Romanization
1. Giles, Allen Herbert
A Chinese-English dictionary. 3rd ed. Shanghai, China, Kelly & Walsh, 1912. 2v.
2. Ware, James Roland
Vocabularies to the intermediate Chinese texts used at Harvard University. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard-Yenching institute, 1937.
A very useful Romanization table for filing purpose on p. 8-11.
- VI. Four-corner system for author numbers
1. Wang, Yün-wu
Wong's system for arranging Chinese characters; the revised four-corner number system. Shanghai, Commercial press, 1928.
2. Wang, Yün-wu, comp.
Wang yun wu hsiao tz'ü hui. [A concise dictionary of Chinese characters arranged by four-corner system] Shanghai, China, Commercial press, 1936.
- VII. Classification and cataloging
1. Ch'iu, K'ai-ming
. . . A classification scheme for Chinese and Japanese books. Washington, D.C., Committee on Far Eastern studies, American council of learned societies, 1943.
2. Ch'iu, Kai-ming
Chung kuo t'u shu pien mu fa. [Cataloging rules for Chinese books] Shanghai, China, Commercial press, 1934.