



11-1-1977

Editorial Note

Eugene Wu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal>

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Wu, Eugene (1977) "Editorial Note," *Journal of East Asian Libraries*: Vol. 1977 : No. 54 , Article 10.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal/vol1977/iss54/10>

This Obituary is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of East Asian Libraries by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

EDITORIAL NOTE

A. Kaiming Chiu, 1898-1977

A Memorial

Alfred Kaiming Chiu, Librarian *Emeritus* of the Harvard-Yenching Library and Honorary Curator of Rare Books in the Harvard-Yenching Library, died in Cambridge on November 13, 1977, after a short illness. He was 79.

Widely acknowledged as the dean of East Asian librarianship in the United States, Dr. Chiu was graduated in economics and library science from Central China College in Wuchang, China, in 1922, and served for two years as Librarian of the University of Amoy before coming to the United States in 1924. After completing another library degree at the New York Public Library School (later to become the School of Library Service of Columbia University), Dr. Chiu came to study at Harvard, receiving his M. A. in 1927 and his Ph. D. in economics in 1933.

It was during the period of his studies at Harvard that Archibald Cary Coolidge, the Director of the Harvard Library, enlisted Dr. Chiu's aid in organizing the university's small but growing Chinese and Japanese collections. For almost four decades, from 1927 to 1965, the year of his retirement, Dr. Chiu served with great distinction as the first Librarian of the Harvard-Yenching Library, then known as the Chinese-Japanese Library of the Harvard-Yenching Institute at Harvard University. Under his able direction and dedicated service, the Harvard-Yenching Library collection expanded from fewer than 7,000 to more than 400,000 volumes, and became the finest and the largest university library of its kind in the Western world.

Dr. Chiu, a bibliophile and an expert on Chinese rare books, was the author of the Harvard-Yenching classification scheme for East Asian Books, a synthesis of traditional Chinese and Western classification systems, which was subsequently adopted by most of the major East Asian libraries in the United States and several others in Europe and Australia. His introduction of the use of romanized entries on catalog cards for Chinese and Japanese books has also become a universal standard in the cataloging of Oriental materials. Among his other pioneering contributions to East Asian librarianship were the first centralized cataloging program he supervised at Harvard of World War II Chinese publications, and the printing of the Harvard-Yenching Library catalog in book form, a project which was unfortunately interrupted by the outbreak of the Pacific War after the publication of the first three volumes in Peking.

Dr. Chiu's professional advice was widely sought by other American universities. Immediately after World War II, he was consulted by the Hoover Institution at Stanford University in the establishment of Hoover's Chinese Collection. He also advised the University of California in Berkeley in the reorganization of its East Asiatic Library. Following his retirement, he became a consultant to the University of Minnesota and helped

found its East Asian Library. From 1966 to 1970, at the invitation of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, he served as the Institution's first University Librarian. His thirty-year association with the Boston Museum of Fine Arts as a Consultant in Chinese Literature also continued until 1970. At the time of his death, Dr. Chiu was supervising the listing of the Harvard-Yenching Library's rare books collection for publication in a catalog.

To the undersigned, Dr. Chiu was a dear friend, a respected colleague, and a superb teacher for twenty-five years. His erudition, kindness, devotion, and wisdom were inspirational and will be sorely missed. His was a full, useful, and productive life. He will long be remembered as a steadfast pioneer and faithful worker in a field which presented, as it continues to present, a myriad of challenges. Such is the legacy I know we shall all cherish as we try to follow in his steps.

(Eugene W. Wu)