



6-1-1983

The Programs for Reproducing and Preserving Twentieth-Century Chinese Publications at the Center for Chinese Research Materials in Washington, D.C.

Pingfeng Chi

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

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Chi, Pingfeng (1983) "The Programs for Reproducing and Preserving Twentieth-Century Chinese Publications at the Center for Chinese Research Materials in Washington, D.C.," *Journal of East Asian Libraries*: Vol. 1983 : No. 70 , Article 8.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal/vol1983/iss70/8>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 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.

THE PROGRAMS FOR REPRODUCING AND PRESERVING
TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHINESE PUBLICATIONS AT
THE CENTER FOR CHINESE RESEARCH MATERIALS
IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Pingfeng Chi

Center for Chinese Research Materials

I. The Founding of the Center for Chinese Research Materials (CCRM)

The mushrooming growth of Chinese studies in the United States during the 1960's brought about a rapid expansion of the Chinese language holdings of America's East Asian libraries. According to Professor T. H. Tsien, the average annual increase in East Asian holdings in American libraries in the 1960's was more than 300,000 volumes.¹ More than half of the materials held by these collections were in Chinese.²

This expansion, however, could still not satisfy the increasing demands of scholars in the field of Chinese Studies. To meet some of their immediate needs, the Joint Committee on Contemporary China of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council appointed a Subcommittee on Materials in 1963 to study the situation. After 3 years of investigation the Subcommittee on Materials concluded that a special organization, other than the libraries, was needed to search for valuable materials and make them available at a reasonable cost to libraries and scholars. In 1966, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) in Washington, D. C., together with the Joint Committee on Contemporary China, submitted a funding proposal to the Ford Foundation for the creation of such an organization, which was later named the Center for Chinese Research Materials (CCRM). With a grant of \$500,000 from the Ford Foundation, the Center for Chinese Research Materials was formally established in May 1968.

II. The Task of the Center

Policy guidance for CCRM's activities is formulated by a six-member advisory committee made up of three librarians and three faculty members. The Executive Director of the Association of Research Libraries administers CCRM's operations and serves as an ex-officio member of the Advisory Committee.³ The Advisory Committee meets twice a year to evaluate the performance of CCRM and make suggestions for CCRM's project planning.

In March 1968, shortly after the awarding of the Ford Foundation grant, the Advisory Committee was established and the initial guidelines for CCRM were drawn up.

The Center will devote itself primarily to the task of acquiring, reproducing and distributing Chinese materials needed by scholars, particularly with regard to the study of twentieth-century China.

This was CCRM's primary function during its initial stage.

Before long, however, CCRM's task was expanded under the guidance of its Advisory Committee to include bibliographic services to librarians and scholars in the China field. A Newsletter was inaugurated. Published two to three times a year, it lists all titles of materials reproduced by CCRM, together with bibliographic annotations. CCRM has also reproduced and published about thirty bibliographic works during the past 15 years, including the most recent Catalog of the Wason Collection on China and the Chinese of Cornell University.⁴

III. The Center's Reproduction and Preservation Programs

As described above, the major tasks for CCRM are the supply of research materials on twentieth-century China and the provision of bibliographic services to librarians and scholars in the field of Chinese studies. From the beginning, however, reproduction of research materials has always been CCRM's primary activity.

A few words about how we determine which materials to reproduce may help explain the program conducted at CCRM. We identify current trends and needs in the field, and according to these needs we search for materials. To assure that materials selected for reproduction meet current demands, CCRM's director and research staff maintain close contact with librarians and research institutions and attend scholarly meetings. We also solicit suggestion from scholars and librarians through correspondence and questionnaires.

Once research needs are identified, original materials desired are located and loan arrangements are made with libraries or individual collections in this country and abroad. In many cases, few if any libraries have complete runs of serial materials such as newspapers and periodicals. CCRM undertakes extensive searching and making loan arrangements with several libraries simultaneously in order to assemble the scattered issues into as complete runs as possible.

The duplication process is started immediately upon receipt of the materials. The mode of reproduction is determined by the original material; long runs of serials such as newspapers and periodicals are usually put on microfilm. Short runs such as monographs are reproduced in xerographic copy or offset copy format.

The final step of the reproductions program is distribution. All materials reproduced by CCRM are marketed for sale through our Newsletter, which is published two to three times a year. The Newsletter, with annotations and prices listed for each reproduced title, is distributed free of charge to approximately 1,400 libraries, research institutions, and individual scholars in the United States and abroad.

This time-consuming and complicated process, which no single East Asian university library could afford to follow, has become common practice at CCRM. CCRM is currently in its 16th year of operation. During the past 15 years, the Center

has reproduced more than 1,800 titles of current and retrospective materials. These include 52 newspaper titles, 173 periodical titles, 213 titles of government publications, 96 titles of yearbooks, 132 research aids, and 1,136 monographs.

Most of the materials reproduced under the CCRM program are concerned with contemporary China, spanning the twentieth century to the present. Divided by subject, these materials deal with Republican China, the Chinese Communist movement, and the People's Republic of China. Among the most noteworthy materials in CCRM's reproduction program are long or nearly complete runs of the North China Daily News, Hua-tzu jih-pao (The Chinese Mail), Shen pao (Chinese Daily News), Shun-t'ien shih-pao (Peking Times), Tung-fang tsa-chih (The Eastern Miscellany), and She-hui h'o-hsueh tsa-chih (Quarterly Review of Social Sciences). All were originally published during the Republican period. Other noteworthy publications include Ch'uan-kuo hsien shu-mu (National Bibliography), Ch'uan-kuo tsung shu-mu (Cumulative National Bibliography), Jen-min jih-pao so-yin (Index to People's Daily), and Ch'uan kuo chu-yao pao k'an tzu-liao so-yin (Index to Major Newspapers and Periodicals of China), published in the People's Republic of China; as well as monographs on the Chinese Communist movement in the border regions.

Materials published in the People's Republic were difficult for Americans to obtain before the normalization of relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China in 1979. The above titles have been welcomed by many students, researchers, and librarians who often utilized these publications in their search for research materials. During the 1970's, learned journals published by universities and literary periodicals launched at local levels in China were considered invaluable in the China field. Some Hong Kong book dealers obtained issues of these periodicals through refugees, visitors to China, or other channels, and sold them for U. S. \$100 per issue. From 1975 to 1979, CCRM released 483 issues of 59 titles of such learned journals and local literary periodicals.

With the establishment of diplomatic relations between Washington and Beijing, most publications which are generally available in China have become available in the United States. Librarians and scholars who once relied on CCRM to provide duplicated copies of materials can now purchase original printings directly from the PRC. As a result, CCRM is no longer including current publications from the People's Republic of China in its reproduction program.

CCRM's reproduction program has brought about a solution to the problem of how to prevent the further deterioration of materials in East Asian libraries in the United States. Due to atmospheric conditions in library stacks in years past, retrospective materials have fallen apart or have become too brittle to be made available to researchers. This deterioration is one of the major problems facing all East Asian libraries in the U. S. today. Since 1968, some of these materials have been preserved on microfilm or in photocopy and offset format by CCRM. More than 3,700 reels of microfilm have been made by the Center from the retrospective materials held by East Asian libraries in this country and abroad.

Today some East Asian libraries have preservation programs of their own. These differ significantly, however, from CCRM's preservation program. While libraries typically preserve only their own holdings, the scope of the Center's preservation

program is more comprehensive. From the outset, CCRM has devoted itself to assembling complete sets of serial materials from broken runs. This is what makes the Center's preservation program unique.

IV. Two Special Projects

CCRM is currently engaged in two large reproduction projects: the microfilming of government gazettes of Republican China, and the microfilming of Chinese local newspapers published during the early years of the People's Republic of China. A brief examination of these two projects may help explain the nature of the Center's preservation program in greater detail.

A. The Government Gazettes Project. This project was launched at CCRM in 1971. A total of 1,112 reels of microfilm have been produced to date. This large set of microfilm includes gazettes published by the central, provincial, and municipal governments of pre-1949 China. Issued monthly, biweekly, weekly, or in some cases daily, these gazettes contain documentation about all aspects of government administration at all levels after 1912. The bulk of the films were made from the holdings of the Library of Congress and other East Asian libraries in the United States and abroad. Although the Center's set of Chinese government gazettes appears to be the most comprehensive run available in this country, many issues are missing. According to our information, tremendous numbers of additional volumes are held by libraries both on the Chinese mainland and Taiwan. In Taiwan, the Kuomintang Party History Commission possesses the largest run of Chinese government gazettes. CCRM initiated negotiations with the Commission for access to their holdings as early as 1971, but a preliminary agreement was not reached until last year for filming the missing issues from the Commission's library. Actual microfilming has not yet started because the final contract is still being negotiated.

The Center for Chinese Research has also established contacts with the National Library of China in Peking, and we hope to reach some agreement with that library for access to its holdings. If these projects materialize, a nearly complete run of the Chinese government gazettes will be available on microfilm from CCRM.

B. The Chinese Newspapers Project. The library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) of London University, Europe's best and largest library for the study of Modern China, possesses an extensive collection of post-1949 Chinese local newspapers, many of which are unavailable outside of China. The SOAS holdings contain 38 titles of provincial and municipal newspapers covering a period from 1951 to 1966. In 1977, CCRM reached an agreement with the SOAS library to film and distribute its local newspaper holdings.

The Center's staff has also made a comprehensive survey of the availability of Chinese local newspapers in the United States and abroad. We have found that two large collections in microfilm are held by the Hoover Institution and the Library of Congress, and that quite large holdings in original form are owned by the Institute of Scientific Information on Social Sciences of the Academy of Sciences of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

With this information in mind, we first decided not to duplicate from the SOAS holdings any issues which are already available at Hoover or the Library of Congress. At the same time, we decided to negotiate an agreement with the Soviet Institute of Scientific Information on Social Sciences, requesting additional issues in microfilm which are missing from the Hoover, Library of Congress, and SOAS holdings. Finally, however, we decided that this would not be convenient for users who may need all three different holdings at the same time and who would not wish to switch from one set of microfilms to another while using them. Therefore, we decided to film the entire collection of Chinese local newspapers held by the SOAS library and to fill the missing gaps with issues available in the Hoover, LC, and Moscow collections. The SOAS collection has been shipped from London University to the Center, and nine out of the 38 titles received have already been filmed. We hope that the entire project will be completed early next year. It will result in the most comprehensive run of Chinese local newspapers available outside of China.

V. Conclusion

To summarize, during the 15 years since its establishment in 1968, CCRM has successfully performed the tasks laid down by our Advisory Committee in devoting our efforts to reproducing and preserving research materials on twentieth-century China. CCRM's reproductions program has proven to be very effective in meeting the needs of librarians and scholars in the field of Chinese studies. Through our preservation program, CCRM has been active in assembling broken runs of serial materials and making more complete sets in microfilm available than ever before.

Notes

1. Tsuen-hsuei Tsien, Current Status of East Asian Collections in American Libraries, 1974-1975. Washington, D. C., 1976, p. 3
2. Ibid., p. 2
3. Present members of the Advisory Committee to CCRM include Philip J. McNiff, Chairman (The Boston Public Library); Lloyd E. Eastman (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Ying-zao Kau (Brown University), Antony Maar (Yale University), Lyman Van Slyke (Stanford University), and Eugene Wu (Harvard University). Shirley Echelman, Executive Director of the Association of Research Libraries, serves as an ex-officio member. Former members include Albert Feuerwerker, John Israel, John W. Lewis, Frederick W. Mote, G. William Skinner, James R. Townsend, Warren M. Tsuneishi, Edwin G. Beal, Roy M. Hofheinz, Jr., David T. Roy, Wei-ying Wan, Stephen A. McCarthy, John P. McDonald, John G. Lorenz, and Ralph E. McCoy.

4. Paul Cheng, ed., The Catalog of the Wason Collection on China and the Chinese. Washington, D. C., 1980. This catalog is divided into two parts (Part I, Vol. 1; Part II, Vols. 1-7). Part one is a collection of serial publications which contains some 4,200 titles in Chinese, Japanese, English, and other Western languages. Part two is a collection of monographs which includes over 100,000 titles of which 68,000 are in Chinese, 6,600 in Japanese, and 29,000 are in Western languages.