A Preliminary Survey of Data Bases and Other Automated Services for Chinese Studies

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With the arrival of the electronic age and the wide access to computers since the 1980s, we are not only faced with selecting among the massive quantities of "published" information but also forced to choose among many different methods of information media to retrieve the needed knowledge. Of course, speed, accuracy, and completeness of the delivery and retrieval of the desired information are the quality which researchers have come to expect of all such electronic information media.

The delivery of information written in western languages by electronic methods, as one of the alternative information services, started many years earlier than information retrieval in the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean (CJK) languages, for obvious reasons. Since the introduction of CD-ROMs in early 1985, the information environment has been transformed. Because of their convenience and cost effectiveness, transportable media such as CD-ROMs and tape load data are now often preferred over timesharing systems to access archival data.

An important question in the field of Chinese studies is how the United States and China can exchange electronic publications or automated services when Chinese computing is so different from the United States' system. Fortunately, many obstacles are gradually being overcome and the technological linkage between CJK and US data bases are now feasible utilizing CD-ROM and other installations. This is welcome news. As we all know, one of the greatest challenges for China scholars is to locate information from the countless volumes of Chinese language literature which do not even have indices. Computerizing literature in Chinese is a way to end painful, time-consuming manual search.

This paper focuses on the data bases and other automated services available for Chinese studies, for electronic publications are fast becoming important resources for Chinese studies as a whole. Since most of the automated resources on Chinese studies usually cover a variety of subject matters, I will view the data bases which have broad implications for most of the researchers in the field.

DATA BASES FOR CHINESE STUDIES

The chart of the data bases for Chinese studies I compiled made here is far from complete and should only be considered a "preliminary survey of Chinese data bases". In general, information on Chinese data bases is not well publicized. With only a few articles written
on the subject, most of the names on my list of data bases were found in obscure publications. Furthermore, since data bases on Chinese studies are often not formally introduced or reviewed, some of my information has come by word of mouth. Therefore, to do research on the subject, I sent out dozens of letters to sponsors and producers of data bases for verification and I am greatly indebted to those who responded to my inquiry. The results of my survey, which number fifty-six titles in all, are provided on the chart in Chinese that is appended to this paper.

Among the institutions which sponsor the title selection and production of data bases on Chinese studies, the following two institutions are worth special mention:

**Names and titles of the individuals who responded to my inquiry together with the dates of their reply:**


Chu, Ming-hsiieh 朱鸣學; in charge of the production of Hung lou meng and Ch'üan T'ang shih at Shenzhen University; March 1992.

Ding, Zy-kaan 岑之侃; manager of Twenty-five Chinese Dynasties Data Base at the Computer Center, Academia Sinica; February 1992.


Lee, Chik-fang 李直方; Head, Fung Ping Shan Library, University of Hong Kong; February 1992.

Shen, Zhi-hung 沈治宏; researcher at the Institute of Chinese Classical Literature, Sichuan University; March 1992.

Li, Po 李波; researcher, Chinese Department, Harbin Normal University; March 1992.

Su, Ching-hsing 苏精精; Head, Rare-Book Division of National Central Library; March 1992.

Tian, Yi 天; researcher, Computing Center, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; February 1992.

Wang, Yen 王; Librarian, Chengdu Information Center of Chinese Academy of Sciences; January 1992.

Xiong, Jin-ming 熊景明; library associate, Universities Service Centre, Chinese University of Hong Kong; March 1992.
1) Academia Sinica in Taipei (Computing Center and other institutes, especially the Institute of History and Philology). "Shih chi tzu tung hua chi hua 計划 (Automation plan for historical literature)," under the guidance of the Institute of History and Philology, has developed six groups of Chinese classical literature into full-text retrieval databases. Among them, special note should be given to the following: *Nien wu shih ch'iian wen tzu liao k'u 廿五史全文資料庫* (The Twenty-five dynastic histories data base), completed in six years (1984-1990), is the single largest and one of the most important data bases for sinological studies. The East Asia Library at the University of Washington is the only institution in North America which has this data base as of this writing. Those of you who wish to search any characters or terms in any of the dynastic histories are welcome to send your request to the East Asia Library. You will experience the dynamic search results capable of electronic publications. The Academia Sinica has also produced many other computerized works such as *Ch'ing tai nei ko ta k'u so yin 清代內閣大庫索引* and a data base of Ph.D dissertations and Masters' theses written in Taiwan.

2) Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing (Computer Department). The program, "Chung-kuo ku tien wen hsien chi suan chi shu chu* k'u 计算機數據庫 (Computer Technology for Processing Ancient Chinese Literature)" has successfully completed six works and has other works in the planning stage. A series of computerized publications will produce various concordances and these concordances will be side products of this series of computerized publications.

OTHER AUTOMATED SERVICES

A. Periodical Indexes

Periodical indexes in various subjects for western language publications have long been in existence and many have added computerized online services since the 1980s. DIALOG, one of the largest online services, covering more than six hundred files (including *Historical abstracts*), is one of the most indispensable data bases for the reference library.

Automated information services for Chinese-language periodical articles are slowly catching up, but most of these are indices in science and technology. The National Central Library in Taipei, however, is a leader in providing periodical index services. Its *Chung-hua min kuo ch'i k'an lun wen so yin tzu liao k'u 中華民國期刊論文索引資料庫* ("Index to Chinese periodical literature") covers over one thousand Taiwan periodicals and started in January 1970 in paper format, followed in January 1983 by an online service. Its *Chung-hua min kuo cheng fu kung pao so yin tzu liao k'u 中華民國政府公報索引資料庫* (Index to Chinese official gazettes), covering eighteen Taiwan government publications, has also been providing service in paper format as well as online since 1984.
The Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN) offers periodical article searching for both western and vernacular language materials published in various countries.

B. Current Activities Regarding Library Automation

The following developments in recent years should be of interest to those using local online catalog searching.

1) Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) and the Research Libraries Group (RLG) have maintained a direct exchange of CJK bibliographic book records since January 1992. This exchange program enables library users to use the CJK online catalog to access more complete bibliographic data and to obtain interlibrary loan information more easily.

2) OCLC started a project in the fall of 1991, in cooperation with the National Library of China in Beijing, to create a computerized catalog of books published between 1911 and 1949 in China: Min kuo shih ch'i tsung mu lu 民國時期總書目.

3) RLG is now in the third phase (1991-1993) of a project entitled "International Online Union Catalog of Rare Chinese Books and Manuscripts Printed Before 1796." RLG started this project in 1989 and has converted and loaded into the RLIN data base pilot records of rare Chinese books from the National Central Library, the Princeton University Library, and Columbia University Library. Currently, the project is in the process of coordinating a union catalog of rare Chinese materials held by major North American and European institutions and reviewing records created at Beijing University and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

4) In April 1991, the Asia Library at the University of Michigan became the first major East Asian library to have completed the conversion of its bibliographic records into machine-readable format.

5) In January 1992, the East Asia Library of the University of Washington completed a special project entitled "Ch'ing Dynasty Essays and Local Gazetteers: Preservation and Bibliographic Control." A total of 3,029 titles were cataloged and input into the OCLC data base. The MARC tapes of these records have also been delivered to RLG and the Library of Congress.

6) University Service Centre (USC) of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and Yale University Libraries have reached an agreement recently to transport USC's automated catalog (both monographic and serial titles) to Yale. USC will also provide quarterly updated data.

7) The INNOPAC system, already installed at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Academia Sinica, National Taiwan University, and the University of California, San Diego, supports the full CJK character set and allows local libraries to display CJK characters at the local online catalogs.
CONCLUSION

Inevitably, those of us who have been provided with cumbersome and sometimes inadequate searching tools for materials in the Chinese language will find the electronic retrieval in Chinese full text data bases and other automated services an invaluable aid to our research work. Although the chart of the Chinese data bases I have presented here is somewhat preliminary, it offers, I believe, useful information to researchers. The sooner we can identify what products are available, the more quickly we can utilize them and link them into automated library systems for research use. Most importantly, we will be one step closer to where we can save immeasurable research time and reduce frustration.

REFERENCES

Huang, Ch'ing-lien 黃清連. "Nien wu shih ch'üan wen tzu liao k'u’ yü Chung-kuo li shih ti yén chiu 廿五史全文資料庫與中國歷史的研究 ("The Database of the Full-text of the Twenty-five Dynastic Histories as a research tool for Chinese history")." Hsin shih hsüeh 新史學 2, no. 2 (June 1991): 123-127.


Liu, Kuntai 劉坤太. "Tien nao hua Sung jen pi chien so hsi t'ung’ ta k’o wen 〈電腦化眾人筆記檔案系統答客問 (Replies to inquiries about the Computerized Index System of Miscellaneous Notes of Sung Writers)." Hsin shih hsüeh 新史學 2, no. 2 (June 1991): 139-144.

Liu, Tseng-kuei 劉增貴. "Tien nao tsai Han chien yen chiung ti ying yung 〈電腦在漢簡研究中的應用 (The application of computer to the study of Han dynasty wooden strips)." Hsin shih hsüeh 新史學 2, no. 2 (June 1991): 129-139.

"T'ai-wan fang chih chüan wen tzu liao k'u’ shou shu kung k'ai 〈台灣方志全文資料庫 首度公開 ("Taiwan gazetteers full-text data base' publicly announced"). T'ai-wan t'ien yeh yen chiung hsüen 台灣田野研究通訊 (Newsletter of Taiwan history field research), no. 15 (June 1990): 33-35.

Tseng, Tsao-chuang 曾操莊 ... et.al. "Chi suan chi fu chu cheng li Sung tai wen hsien ti yen chiu 〈計算機輔助整理宋代文獻的研究 ("Computer's assistance to the study of Sung dynasty's classical literature")." 1991?
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简介：本书是作者多年研究中国文学中的古典神话与宗教的成果。书中通过对古代神话传说的深入研究，揭示了它们与中国传统文化的密切联系，展现了中华民族的智慧与创造力。
DATA BASES FOR CHINESE STUDIES (Continued)