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Reviews

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REVIEWS

The Chinese Anti-Rightist Campaign Database 1957- (“中国反右运动数据库, 1957-”), CD-ROM, Hong Kong: Published and distributed by The University Services Center for China Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University Press, 2010.

The first impression of this database upon a user may be that it is compiled by Chinese librarians specialized in the field. A quick glance at the Editorial Board of the database confirms this. One finds the names of four familiar Chinese librarians: Yongyi Song (Chief Editor; California State University), Yuan Zhou (University of Chicago), Zhijia Shen (University of Washington at Seattle), and Zehao Zhou (York College). From 2002-2006, these four librarians served as the major force in the compilation of *The Chinese Cultural Revolution Database 1966-1976*, which, also published in CD-Rom and Online formats by the Chinese University of Hong Kong, has been acquired by and used in East Asian libraries all around the world.

This database, focusing on the Chinese Anti-Rightist Campaign, is the second part of an ambitious project to cover all major political movements in China since 1949, and like its predecessor in the series, it is intended to be used as a comprehensive and accurate source of primary data for the study of the contemporary history of China. The first and largest of its kind, it has more than 12,000 entries including government documents, directives, bulletins, speeches by Mao Zedong and other officials, editorials of major Chinese newspapers and magazines, articles written by the “rightists”, articles published to denunciate the “rightists”, and original archives of the Anti-Rightist Campaign. The size of historical data included is enormous: there are over 25 million Chinese characters of firsthand materials (more than half of which have been re-collated), and nearly 5,000 original Rightists files.

The database contains also documents from other political movements that are closely related to the Anti-Rightist Campaign: the Campaign against the Hu Feng Counterrevolutionary Clique (反胡风反革命集团运动), the Campaign for Eliminating Counterrevolutionaries (肃反运动), and the Socialist Transformation of Industry and Commerce (工商业改造), which were prior to the Anti-Rightist Campaign; the Debate over Red and Expert (红与专辩论), the Double-Anti Campaign (双反运动), the Campaign for Opening the Heart to the Party (向党交心运动), and the Campaign to Pull Out White Flags and Plant Red Flags (拔白旗、插红旗运动), which were subsequent to the Anti-Rightist Campaign.

One likely benefit to the user of a database compiled by librarians is the strong search functionality built in. And it is so for this database. Not only is it fully searchable in both Chinese and English by author, subject, title, date, and keyword, the database also has such useful functions as “print,” “keyword highlight,” and “toggle between Chinese and English.” In addition, a new function that allows the user to search by “place” (which was not included in *The Chinese Cultural Revolution Database 1966-1976*) has been added to this database. This new function facilitates geographical search tasks such as finding from the database all articles that were published in Shanghai. When you click the “place” icon and choose “Shanghai” from

a pop-up list, hundreds of titles will be brought up, ready for you to browse on the screen. You can read the entire text of a title if by selecting it.

With its obvious strengths, the database could benefit from a few additional improvements. One is to add a clear icon on the first-appearing interface to indicate which language (Chinese or English) will be used. This would make it easier for the user to locate materials in the database by their language expertise. It would also be helpful to display all the subject headings under each article so that the user can click on a subject heading to access related data.

However, these are minor issues and do not reduce the enormous value of this intellectual product. The database has received extremely positive comments from well-known scholars in and out of China.

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