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Nanking  
Academic  
College of Agriculture + Forestry  
Agricultural Research Library  
1930, n.d.

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**TRANSFER**

University of Nanking  
College of Agriculture and Forestry  
RESEARCH LIBRARY  
of Old Chinese Books on Agriculture  
and Related Subjects.

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Introduction

The Research Library is a collection of old Chinese literature on agriculture and rural life, and related subjects. Its purpose is to make known by modern research and library methods the extent and content of this literature, especially to make available, through adequate indexes, the important historical, cultural and scientific information now locked up in its hundreds of thousands of pages. The Research Library is a department of the University Library and its staff are also members of the faculty of the College of Agriculture and Forestry.

The extent of old Chinese literature bearing on agriculture and related subjects has only recently been comprehended. A few old Chinese works on agriculture have been fairly well known and it was not until 1921, following an attempt by the College of Agriculture and Forestry, with the cooperation of the United States Department of Agriculture, to index in a modern scientific way several of these better known works, that it became clear that this literature was very much



more extensive than anyone had previously suspected. The possibility of an extensive literature was sufficiently alluring for the College to attempt a bibliography, which was published by the University Library in June 1924 and contained more than two thousand references to important works. Even so the bibliography was far from complete, but this very rich field of literature had been sufficiently explored to indicate its tremendous value and significance as a source of research material in this important field of Chinese life and culture. This published bibliography is presented herewith as Exhibit "A".

The material above referred to is contained in books on agriculture, books on famine, the official gazetteers and other geographical and historical works, books on administration, and in the Lei Shu (Encyclopaedias) and Ts'ung Shu (Collectanea). The Lei Shu corresponds somewhat to a western encyclopaedia, that is, a book by itself, usually full of quotations from other works, arranged by subjects according to some definite plan. The Ts'ung Shu is a collective publication of independent works and often contains some works pertaining to agriculture and related subjects.

The Research Library Collection of Old Agricultural  
Books and Related Subjects.

The following table indicates the extent of the Research Library collections as of April 22, 1930 and represents purchases made, in addition to some gifts, over a period of about seven years.

	<u>sets</u>	<u>volumes</u>
(1) Books on agriculture	198	2,279
(2) Books on famine	44	136
(3) Geographical works	1923	20,548
(4) Lei Shu (Encyclopaedia)	78	5,231
(5) Tsung Shu (Collectanea)	266	17,058
(6) Others	106	2,480
Total	2615	47,732

This collection is estimated to contain 85 to 90% of all the literature extant on agriculture and related subjects. The literature on famines is over 90% complete.

A special effort has been made to collect different editions of old Agricultural books to facilitate their proof reading in connection with the compilation of the Agricultural Encyclopaedia Sinica, referred to in a later paragraph. A dozen different editions of "Tsi Ming Yao Shu" ( ) a famous writing of the 5th or 6th century, have been secured. The Library had been searching for the original edition of another very famous work on agriculture, the "Nung Chen Chuan Shu" ( ) of the Ming Dynasty. A copy of this was finally purchased this last spring in the Peking market. By this addition, all the five different editions of this famous book are now included in the Research Library collection. These are but examples of the difficult problems of editions and it is quite clear that all possible editions of any work are necessary. Many other excellent editions and manuscript copies of rare agricultural books have been collected. There are many other editions that can be obtained only by copying.

Geographical Works, including Official Gazetteers

Chinese regional gazetteers in their modern form were developed in the Sung Dynasty (960-1276). Since then, enormous numbers of works have accumulated. Although they were frequently edited by unqualified officials, many were compiled by great scholars. Even the inferior ones preserve much local source material and information which are found no where else. Their nature and use may well be explained by quoting from a recent paper on "Chinese Books" by Dr. Walter T. Swingle of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



"Another field in which Chinese records are unrivaled is that of the so-called gazetteers or annals for each administrative division of the country. These gazetteers of the empire, the provinces, prefectures, and districts are veritable mines of information as they not only give full accounts of the mountains, rivers, roads, lakes, estuaries, etc., but also of the political subdivisions, villages, temples, etc., and records of the natural products and manufactures of the region, or remarkable events, and above all elaborate and full biographies of famous men and women native to the region. Those who have seen most of this branch of Chinese literature are most impressed with its value as a source of historical and cultural material for the study of China and its productions and local history. All the gazetteers noted above are official in character, but there are others describing rivers, mountains, temples, and islands that are unofficial but often of very great interest."

The gazetteers also contain maps, census reports, records of native tribes, acreage of cultivated land, rates and lists of taxes, accounts of education, social customs, bibliography of books written by local people of or about the region, and many other things of similar interest. It is indeed a great branch of Chinese literature, a knowledge of and recourse to which is absolutely necessary for historical, cultural and social studies of all kinds.

The volume of this class of Chinese literature is really great. China as a whole, and every province, every prefecture, almost every district, and frequently even some small locality in a district, has an official gazetteer. Such gazetteers in well-developed regions are usually rewritten every 50 or 100 years and some have been revised as many as ten or more times.

There are more than 20 provinces, about 200 prefectures during Tsing Dynasty, and some 1800 districts in China. The provincial and prefectural gazetteers are often very voluminous works, and even the district gazetteers often contain ten to twenty or more books, frequently bound in as many volumes. It is estimated that in all probably about 2500 different regions have been covered by gazetteers and that over 10,000 different revisions have been published during the past seven or eight hundred years, probably in all at least 100,000 volumes. Of course, not all of them are extant; many old editions are already lost, as their circulation is usually local and limited and they could easily disappear. Nevertheless, about half of them or at least 5000 sets may be found at present if exhaustive survey and special effort will be made without limitation. The printed catalogue of Chinese Geographical Works in the Research Library is presented herewith as Exhibit "B".

#### Modern Indexing of Old Agricultural Literature

Appendix "A" presents a list of Chinese books that have been completely indexed or partly indexed by the Research Library. The system of indexing which has been used is one that was worked out very largely by Dr. Walter T. Swingle of the United States Department of Agriculture, and provides an easy reference to all pertinent material in the books which have been indexed. By studying the index cards on any subject, one can find at a moment's notice whatever reference on that subject the indexed book contains. In other words, by using a modern system of indexing on this old Chinese literature, we are making readily available information that would otherwise be hidden or found only with the greatest difficulty. When the indexing on the Agricultural Encyclopaedia Sinica is completed there will be revealed both to Chinese and foreign students and scholars the extent and content of



this extensive literature. When one considers the wide range of information contained in this literature involving not only agriculture, sericulture, horticulture, animal husbandry, botany, and the whole field of scientific agriculture, but also practically the whole field of economics and sociology, especially as they pertain to agriculture and rural life, one begins to realize with what a veritable mine of historical information one is dealing.

#### Agricultural Encyclopaedia Sinica

The original attempts made to index some of the more important works in the old Chinese literature soon indicated a very large amount of duplication. The only way out appeared to be a modern compilation of all material referring to agriculture and related subjects which the old Chinese literature contains. Original editions, wherever possible, are being used in the Encyclopaedia. This naturally requires a very great deal of careful work, including very careful proof-reading. During more than three years of work on this Encyclopaedia, material has accumulated to the extent of more than a dozen million characters, with much additional material yet to be included. When all the material has been collected it will be organized in a systematic way. All the material will then be carefully indexed and the whole published. This will make available for the first time a great mass of very valuable information which up to the present has for the most part lain buried.

#### Index to Periodicals

Reference was made above to the indexing of all material on agriculture and related subjects that have appeared in English or Chinese in periodicals which have been published in China. This list of publications includes all the important journals and periodicals as, for example, the Journal of the North China branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, the first

volume of which appeared in 1858. The total number of periodical publications indexed includes 100 in the Chinese language and 16 in the English language, with more than 16,000 entries. This indexing has been done over a period of years 1922 to 1928, and will soon be published under the name "Agricultural Index".

#### Publications

Relatively little of the past eight years work by the Research Library has developed to the point of publishing. In addition to Exhibit "A", a "Bibliography of Chinese Literature on Agriculture", and Exhibit "B", a "Catalogue of Chinese Geographical Works in the University of Nanking Library", Mr. Wang Kwoh-ting is the author of a Chinese dictionary arranged according to a new system of filing Chinese characters. It has been published by the Chung Hwa Book Company, Shanghai. Arrangements have also been made with the Commercial Press, Shanghai, to reprint some of the most important of the old Chinese books on agriculture. These will be published on the basis of a restudy of the earliest editions and after careful annotating and proof-reading, so as to preserve their original features. The Agricultural Index of periodicals referred to above will be published shortly. The Agricultural Encyclopaedia Sinica will be published in due course but at least another four or five years will be required to get this material into shape for publication.

#### The Research Value of the Research Library Collection

The research value of this collection of literature bearing on agriculture and related subjects will be obvious. As pointed out, the Library already contains the third or fourth largest collection of this literature in the world. If present plans can be carried out, the collection



will be enlarged and made as complete as it can possibly be made. The research value, already great, will naturally increase as new additions are made to the present collection. It will be quite evident that this collection of literature must of necessity be sought out and consulted by sinologists who wish to avail themselves of the best sources of material relating to the wide group of subjects centering about agriculture and rural life, which the Research Library contains, and which must be considered in every effort to understand the social and cultural life of China's vast population of past ages.

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September 20th 1930.

Dr. Y. G. Chen,  
Mr. K. S. Sie,  
Dr. T. L. Tsu,  
Mr. K. T. Wang,

TRANSFER

Gentlemen:-

I am sending you herewith the full correspondence and statement in connection with our request to the Harvard Yenching Institute for financial help for the Research Library for the further collection of books either by purchase or by copying. It developed that this request had to be acted upon by the Harvard Yenching group in Peking as well as by the group here.

We have had the counsel and help of Dr Eric North who is a member of the Directorate of the HYI. Dr. North is writing to Dr Stuart suggesting favorable action. He has sent copy of the project to Dean Chase and Dean Bonham of Harvard and I am to see them next week. Dr North has been of great help and made some very pertinent suggestions in connection with the statement covering the Research Library. He will personally attend to following the matter through so that the project will have the best possible cooperation.

Mr Carside and I both feel that it would help matters a bit if President Chen were to send a letter to Dr. Stuart along the following lines:

Dear Dr. Stuart:-

Mr. Carside, secretary of the University of Nanking Board of Founders has sent to us here a complete file of the correspondence and statement in connection with the University's request to the Harvard Yenching Institute for a grant of money for our Research Library in order to help complete its collection of old Chinese literature on Agriculture and related subjects including Official and special Gazetteers. The statement sent to you from New York covers, I believe, the scope and importance of the ~~Library~~ Research Library satisfactorily and needs little comment. I am sure the significance of this literature, from so many angles, appeals to you and to the others connected with the Institute.

I want to send this short letter on behalf of the Board of Directors and of my colleagues who are directly interested in and responsible for, the Research Library, to assure you that the project has our united heartiest approval and commendation and to express the hope that your committee will be able to make favourable recommendations to the Harvard Yenching group in America.

If we can be of any further help in supplying information further information or in answering ~~any~~ questions which may arise, please let me know.

Yours Very Sincerely, Y. G. Chen, Pres.

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Such a letter would indicate that we are all working together and would have a good effect. I have only one copy of the complete correspondence and am sending it to Dean Sie, and would suggest that he confer with you individually or collectively as you deem best. I think the project has a very good chance of going through.

My highest regards to you all,

sincerely,

John H. Reiser

0778



Research Library

TRANSFER

September 19, 1930

Harvard-Yenching Institute,  
Cambridge,  
Mass.

Gentlemen:

On behalf of the Board of Founders of the University of Nanking, I submit herewith a request for financial help for the further development of the University of Nanking Research Library of old Chinese books pertaining to agriculture and related subjects. This request has been forwarded by Dr. Y. C. Chen, President of the University of Nanking. The undertaking is heartily endorsed by Mr. T. L. Tzu, Chairman of Committee, The Institute of Chinese Cultural Studies of the University of Nanking.

A full statement of the Research Library is presented herewith and indicates the importance of the undertaking. Already the collection of geographical works, including official gazetteers, is the third or fourth largest in the world, and the collection of literature pertaining directly to agriculture and related subjects is undoubtedly the largest and most complete of its kind to be found anywhere, either in China or in foreign countries. However, none of these four largest collections is complete. Of official gazetteers, old editions, especially those of the Sung, Yuen and Ming Dynasties, can only be located here and there and duplicates can be secured only by manuscript copying, while new ones are endlessly issued and deserve careful and continuous attention. It will be of great value if such a historical collection can be made as complete as possible, and editions can safely be preserved.

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The University of Nanking has in the past six or seven years invested to the limit of its ability in the purchase of books for this collection. The amount so expended approximates \$15,000 Chinese currency. An additional L.C. \$30,000 to \$35,000 has gone into cataloguing, indexing, and otherwise making the material available for use. As our work on indexing and compilation has increased, less and less money has been available for the direct purchase of books.

Because we believe the work of the Research Library is in line with the purposes of the Harvard-Yenching Institute, we would like to make the following request for funds for the purchase of books to complete, as nearly as possible, our Research Library collection:

\$5,000 Gold for immediate purchase of official gazetteers and other geographical and historical works and books bearing on agriculture and related subjects.

\$5,000 Gold for collecting important rare editions, either by purchasing or by copying, where this latter method has to be resorted to, especially copies of Sung, Yuen and Ming Dynasties, which have been preserved here and there in different libraries.

\$2,000 Gold annually for purchasing official gazetteers, geographical and historical works, and related books on agriculture for a period of three years after the present year.

The first and second requests we would like for use in 1930-31, and the third request for use beginning with the school year July 1, 1930, to June 30, 1931.

We trust this project and request will meet with the approval of the Harvard-Yenching Institute. We shall be glad to furnish further information if you wish it. If a conference is desired, we shall be very glad to arrange for Professor J.H. Reisner, Co-Dean of the College of Agriculture and Forestry of the University of Nanking, to meet with you at such time and place as you may designate.

Very truly yours,

*J. H. Reisner*  
Secretary

0780



Research Library

Copy



TRANSFER

September 20, 1930

Dr. J. Leighton Stuart,  
Yenching University,  
Peking, China

Dear Dr. Stuart:

Mr. Garside thinks I should add a note to his letter to you transmitting a request to the Harvard-Yenching Institute to help in the development of our Research Library. The statement of the Research Library is full, and I think needs no comment.

When Dr. William Hung and Dr. Lucius Porter were in the United States in 1928-29, we discussed this matter informally on several occasions. The request would have gone in earlier to you had it not been for the fact of my illness during all of last year.

I am quite sure that you and the other members of the Harvard-Yenching Institute in China will see the tremendous historical and practical value of this collection which has grown to such an important extent at Nanking, and whose value and importance will be very greatly augmented if we can continue purchases which the granting of our request will make possible. I do hope that the request may be acted upon favorably by the Institute.

With cordial regards and best wishes, I am,

Yours very sincerely,

JHR:SA  
Enc.

John H. Reisner

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*Search Library*

CHINA UNION UNIVERSITIES

Fukien Christian University  
Lingnan University  
University of Nanking

Shantung Christian University  
West China Union University  
Yenching University

Princeton - in - Peking

CENTRAL OFFICE

Cable Address  
Nanfushan, New York

150 Fifth Avenue, New York City

B. A. GARSIDE,  
Secretary-Treasurer

C. A. EVANS,  
Secretary-Treasurer  
September 20, 1930

**TRANSFER**

Telephone  
WATkins 8703-4-5

Dr. J. Leighton Stuart,  
Yenching University,  
Peiping, China.

My dear Dr. Stuart,

I am enclosing herewith the following material relative to a request the University of Nanking is making to the Harvard-Yenching Institute for assistance in building up their Research Library of old Chinese Literature on Agriculture and Related Subjects:-

Statement describing the Research Library and its work.  
Letter to Institute making request for assistance in  
purchasing books to complete collections  
Letter from President Y. G. Chen.  
Letter from Mr. T. L. Tsu.

As you know, Nanking has already accomplished, over a period of years, some extremely valuable work in the collection and indexing of the books now assembled in their Research Library. Yet it is increasingly difficult for the University to allocate from its regular income sufficient funds to continue the purchase of the books which are needed to complete their collections. It is for assistance at this point that they are turning to the Institute.

Dean Reisner discussed this proposal at some length with Dr. Porter and Professor Hung while they were in Harvard during 1928-29. Progress has been delayed, however, chiefly because of Mr. Reisner's ill health during the last year.

We have gone over this material at length with Dr. Eric North. He is forwarding copies of it to Dean Chase and Dean Donham, and Dean Reisner is hoping to have interviews with them during the next few days. I believe Dr. Eric is also sending you a letter.

In Dr. North's judgment, any approval by the Trustees of the Institute of this request from the University of Nanking must depend upon its endorsement by the Administrative Committee of the Harvard-Yenching Institute on the field. We will, therefore, count it one more item in the long list of our debts to you if you will bring this request to the early attention of the Administrative Committee. Since a meeting of the Trustees of the Institute will probably be held in five or six weeks, Dr. North suggests it is desirable that you inform us by cable

0782

Dr. Stuart

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of the decision of the Administrative Committee, so as to facilitate action by the Trustees. If you will be kind enough to send such a cable, either to Dean Chase or to this office, and will let us know the cost involved, we will make reimbursement from our Nanking accounts.

I believe the material we are enclosing herewith will supply all the information you will require. But you need other facts or explanations, they can be secured from President Y. G. Chen, Mr. T. L. Tsu, the Chairman of the University's Committee on the Institute of Chinese Cultural Studies, or Mr. Wang Kwoh-ting, the Chief of the Research Library. All three can be reached at the University of Nanking.

It seems to me that assistance to the Research Library both fits in admirably with the general field of work the Institute is undertaking, and also is in line with the conception of the Institute as having a China-wide outlook and interest. We sincerely hope that both on the field and here in America this request will meet with cordial support.

Very sincerely yours,

*J. A. G. Smith*

BAG/G

Enc. 4

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Appendix A.

University of Nanjing

A LIST OF BOOKS INDEXED IN THE RESEARCH LIBRARY

(960-1280 AD),

I. Completely indexed

- (1) Yu Hai (玉海), an encyclopedia written by Wang Ying-lin in the Sung dynasty. Seven sections of this work related to agriculture under the general name Shih Huo (食貨) were indexed.
- (2) Shou Shih T'ung K'ao (授時通考), compiled by imperial command and published in 1742, in 78 chuan.
- (3) Nan Fan Ts'ao Mu Chuang (南方草木狀), written by Ki Han (嵇含) of the Tsing dynasty, (165-416 AD).
- (4) Nung Sang Chi Yao (農桑輯要), compiled by order of Kublai Khan of Yuan dynasty in 1273.
- (5) Tsan Shih Yao Liao (蠶桑要畧), written by Chang Hsing-fu (張行孚) in 19th century. This work was usually printed as a supplement to Nung Sang Chi Yao.
- (6) Mu Ling Shu Chi Yao (牧令書輯要), a manual for district magistrates, compiled by Hsu Tung (徐棟) in 1838 and by Ting Jih-chang in 1868. Two parts of this work dealing with famine prevention and relief were indexed.

II. Partly indexed

- (1) Eight works of very early days (before Christ) <sup>on agriculture</sup> contained in the collectana Yu Han Shan Fan Chi I Shu (玉函山房輯佚書).
- (2) Tsi Min Yao Shu (齊民要術), written by Chia Shih-hsieh (賈思勰) in 5th or 6th century.
- (3) Nung Shu (農書), written by Wang Cheng (王禎) in the beginning of 14th century, <sup>first published in 1313.</sup>
- (4) Nung Chen Chuan Shu (農政全書), by Hsu Kuang-ki (徐光啟) of Ming dynasty, first published in 1639.
- (5) Chiu Huan Chi Yao Chu Pin (救荒輯要初編), a collectana of five works on famine, edited and published recently by book salers in Shanghai.
- (6) Huang Cheng Tsung Shu (荒政叢書), a collectana of 12 works on famine, edited and partly written by Yu Sung (俞森) in 17th century.
- (7) Chou Tsi Pien (籌濟編), written by Yang Ching-jen (楊景仁), first published in 1826. A book on famine.
- (8) Kang Tsi Lu (康濟錄), a book on famine <sup>compiled</sup> written by Ni Kwoh-lian (倪國璉) in 18th century.
- (9) Kiangnan Tung Chih (江南通志), the official gazetteer of Kiangnan Province which includes the present 2 provinces Kiangsu and Anhwei.
- (10) Chekiang Tung Chih (浙江通志). Of the last two works, only those parts on products were indexed.

0784

Project of the Agricultural Research Library

On account of the value of gazetteers in agricultural research, special effort to collect such literature has been made by the Agricultural Research Library since its establishment in the fall of 1923. Up to the present, 1429 sets or 17,439 volumes of official gazetteers and 567 sets or 3893 volumes of other geographical works have been collected. About 20,000 Mexican dollars, including administrative expenses such as purchasing, cataloguing, repairing, making cardboard book-cases, and so forth, were spent. It is already a fine collection of Chinese official gazetteers, which is about the same size as that of the Library of Congress in Washington. So far as we know, there are two collections which are considerably larger than ours, one in the National Peiping Library, Peiping, and the other in the Eastern Library of the Commercial Press, Shanghai; each contains more than 2600 sets of official gazetteers. But even these are far from <sup>being</sup> complete, as is evidenced by the above estimate and also by the fact that gazetteers present in one collection are frequently lacking in other famous collections. Old editions, especially those of Sung, Yuen, and Ming Dynasties, can only be located here and there, and duplicates can be secured only by manuscript copying; while new ones are endlessly issued and deserve careful and continuous attention. It will be of great value if such a collection can be made as complete as possible, so that such literature can show its full value and that rare <sup>can</sup> editions/safely be preserved.

We hope anxiously that our collection of official gazetteers may be made as complete as possible. (we are) but very much handi-



happened by shortage of funds. In the first three years, we had an annual budget of 3000 Mexican dollars (excluding administrative or handling expenses) for purchasing gazetteers, agricultural books, and the like, but now only have 1000 dollars a year. On the other hand, the price of this class of books increases very rapidly, and is already three or four times more than it was several years ago:

1. Owing to the general and rapid advancement of all prices and costs in the recent years of the Republic.
2. Owing to the general increase of collectors appearing during the last few years.
3. Owing to the fact that the remaining old editions are becoming comparatively scarce.

Even with our whole budget concentrated on the purchasing of official gazetteers, the growth of the collection is very much limited. Good chances for purchasing are liable to be lost.

Nor can we afford to extend the effort for collecting very rare ones, because they are much more expensive. Indeed, we need considerable additional funds for purchasing such literature.

Considering all these needs and opportunities, we make the following request in minimum terms:

\$2,000 Gold annually for purchasing of gazetteers and works of similar uses.

\$5,000 Gold for immediate purchases, as the price of gazetteers increases very rapidly, the earlier the purchases the lower the price will be.

\$5,000 Gold for collecting very rare ones either by purchasing or by copying, especially for copying those copies of Sung, Yuen, and Ming Dynasties occasionally preserved here and there in different libraries.

0786



Notes on the Usefulness of Chinese Official  
Gazetteers

Chinese regional gazetteers in their modern form were developed in the Sung Dynasty (960-1276). Since then, enormous numbers of works have accumulated. Although they were frequently edited by unqualified officials, many were compiled by great scholars. Even the inferior ones preserve much local source material and information which are found no where else. Their nature and use may well be explained by quoting from a recent paper on "Chinese Books" by Dr. Walter T. Swingle of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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native tribes, acreage of cultivated land, rates and lists of taxes, accounts of education, social customs, bibliography of books written by local people of or about the region, and many other things of similar interest. It is indeed a great branch of Chinese literature which is absolutely necessary for cultural and social studies of all kinds.

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