

From the People of the United States of America: The Books for China Programs during World War II

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This essay examines the special programs undertaken by the American Library Association, the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution, the State Department, and the Rockefeller Foundation to supply Chinese libraries with books, periodicals, and other materials during and immediately after World War II, as recorded in numerous contemporary documents from the ALA Archives at the University of Illinois. The condition of libraries in China before the war, wartime destruction of books and libraries, and the heroic efforts of Chinese librarians on behalf of their patrons and institutions through eight years of fighting are also described.

Introduction

In 1936 the Chinese historian Teng-Yuan Chen published a book entitled *The Collection and Destruction of Books in Chinese History*—the first comprehensive scholarly research published on this topic.¹ In this book Chen described both the creation and the destruction of many celebrated book collections through each dynasty of Chinese history, from the Chin Dynasty founded by Chin Shih Huang, who unified China and became its first emperor, to the Ch'ing Dynasty that ended with the abdication of Poo Yi, China's last emperor.

Chen summed up millennia of Chinese history by observing that the country's worst incidents of book destruction were attributable to governmental censorship, natural disasters, careless heirs, or—most devastating of all—the ravages of war.² While chronicling the unparalleled magnitude of book destruction caused by warfare over China's long history, Chen expressed hope that his book would dissuade all future warlords from destroying books.³ Yet he could not have known that even as he was writing, a catastrophe greater than anything he could imagine was already taking shape.

In 1937, just one year after publication of Chen's book, the warlords of Imperial Japan invaded inland China, inflicting staggering losses in

human life and property, and destroying books at a magnitude many times greater than anything Chen documented in all the history his book recounted. During eight horrific years of fighting, hundreds of libraries were completely destroyed and millions of books lost.

Throughout the war and after the restoration of peace, Chinese librarians faced the seemingly impossible task of rebuilding their libraries. In this endeavor they found themselves the beneficiaries of an outpouring of assistance from many of their international colleagues. Though aid came to China from several nations, the greatest contribution to rebuilding its libraries was made by the people of the United States of America through their government's agencies and through the American Library Association. This essay presents the story of that contribution, especially as it is reflected in surviving documents now housed in the ALA Archives at the University of Illinois.

Chinese Library Development before the War

Though the history of libraries in China can be traced back nearly 3,500 years, the modern ideal of a library accessible to the public did not appear until the beginning of the twentieth century. Following China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, an educational reform movement was advocated by some influential government officials in the hopes of strengthening the nation and catching up with the outside world. The work had barely begun when the imperial government was overthrown in the 1911 revolution led by Sun Yat-sen.

Though short-lived, the reform movement achieved some improvements, including the replacement of the classical Confucian examination system with western-style school systems and the establishment of government-supported public libraries at the provincial and national levels. Through these efforts China's first true public library was opened in Hunan Province in 1905, and four years later the National Library in Peiping was established.⁴ By the time of the movement's demise in the aftermath of the 1911 revolution, public libraries had been founded in a dozen provinces including Chekiang, Kiangsu, Anhui, Hupeh, Shensi, Kwangtung, Yunnan, Shantung, Liaoning, Kirin, and Heilungkiang, and also in some of the larger cities such as Tientsin and Nanking. However, most of these new public libraries were in fact converted *shuyuan* libraries previously attached to the traditional academies; their collections were rich in the Chinese classics but not equipped to serve the needs of the general public.⁵

With the founding of the Republic of China in 1912, the establishment of various types of libraries began in earnest. In 1915 the Ministry of

Education developed two sets of regulations instructing local governments to build libraries for public use. These regulations stipulated the creation of public libraries in every province, administrative district, and county, which were to support not only personal study but also mass education. To further mass education efforts, the regulations also required that all public and private schools have their own libraries.

The government's goals in mass education stimulated library development throughout China, and the number of libraries increased steadily, particularly from the late 1920s to the middle 1930s. According to statistics there were 552 libraries in China in 1925, but this number grew to 643 in 1928, then leaped to 1,427 in 1929.⁶ By 1934 there were 2,818 libraries, and in 1936—one year before the Second Sino-Japanese War—4,041.⁷ Many of these libraries were school libraries, "popular libraries," and libraries in "people's educational centers"—a product of the mass education movement begun in 1920. Though generally quite modest in size, these libraries—scattered throughout the country as they were—served very large clienteles.

In addition to these small libraries, large libraries were also developing rapidly. In 1931 a new building in the classical Chinese style was completed in Peiping to house the National Library. In the same year, new buildings for the Municipal Library of Canton and the Provincial Library of Chekiang were also completed. A new provincial library in Hunan was erected in 1932, the previous building having been destroyed by fire two years earlier, while 1933 saw an expansion of the National Tsinghua University Library in Peiping and the completion of a new building for the National Hunan University Library. The National Central University Library in Nanking was enlarged in 1934, and the National University of Peking and the National Wuhan University both celebrated the openings of their new libraries in 1935. In April 1936 the Shanghai Municipal Library moved into a newly completed civic center, while the National Central Library at Nanking—another national library in addition to the one in Peiping—was opened to the public in September of the same year. A number of other buildings, some for college or university libraries and some for municipal or provincial libraries, were also under construction at this time.

In addition to rapid growth in the number of library buildings, library collections also increased dramatically in size. By 1936 the collection of the National Library in Peiping—the largest and best in the country—contained 500,000 publications in Chinese and 117,000 in western languages. There were at least four university libraries and three provincial libraries with collections exceeding 200,000 volumes, and more than twenty libraries with collections of between 100,000 and 200,000 volumes.⁸ Cooperation among libraries, mainly at the local level, developed

quickly—including compilation of union catalogs, centralization of cataloging, and shared acquisition of expensive foreign journals on various subjects. Encouraged by the results of these efforts, Chinese librarians began discussing cooperative programs at the provincial and national levels as well. Overall, China's library services were vastly improved by increases in the number of libraries, the size of their collections, and the promotion of various professional programs and cooperative efforts.⁹ All signs pointed toward continued healthy growth, but this promise was obliterated by the Japanese invasion of inland China.

Devastation of Chinese Libraries

In 1937, six years after establishing military occupation of three provinces in northeastern China (Manchuria), the Japanese decided to conquer the remainder of the country. The Lukouchiao Incident—or Marco Polo Bridge Incident—on 7 July in the outskirts of Peiping served as a convenient excuse, and a full-scale invasion of inland China was rapidly deployed. Japanese troops quickly encircled Peiping, and the battle extended to nearby Tientsin. On 27 July Chinese forces retreated from Peiping, and the city fell to the enemy. Pounded by Japanese bombers and artillery, Tientsin surrendered three days later on 30 July.

Soon after the fall of Peiping and Tientsin, another major battle erupted in the Shanghai area. This bloody clash lasted about three months, and though Chinese troops and civilian volunteers mounted a valiant resistance, Japanese soldiers—aided by their superior air and naval forces—fought their way into the city in November. One month later Nanking, about 150 miles from Shanghai, also fell into enemy hands. While Shanghai, China's largest commercial and industrial city, was heavily damaged, Nanking, then the capital of the country, was subjected to an orgy of brutality, arson, and murder after its surrender—the infamous Rape of Nanking.

The loss of Nanking forced the Chinese government under Chiang Kai-shek to take refuge in Hankow, a great industrial city in central China on the Yangtze River, while the Japanese expanded their occupation in the north and in the environs of Shanghai and Nanking. Although the Chinese succeeded several times in stopping the enemy's advance into central China, Japanese troops—better equipped and supported by aircraft and river gunboats—managed to capture Hankow on 25 October 1938. A few days earlier Canton, the capital of Kwangtung Province and southern China's key port for importing supplies from the west, had also fallen to the Japanese. By 1939 enemy troops occupied—

in addition to Manchuria—more than ten provinces in northern and central China and along the coast, where the most developed industrial and commercial centers of the country were located. With the fall of Hankow, the Chiang Kai-shek government moved to Chungking in Szechwan Province, a city surrounded by mountains and relatively removed from the fighting.

The Japanese invasion brought terrible devastation to Chinese libraries and their collections. Since nearly three-quarters of China's institutions of higher education, along with many cultural and research institutions, were located in the six coastal provinces within the war zone, most of the nation's libraries suffered heavily from bombardment, fire, looting, and confiscation.¹⁰

The war claimed its first library in Tientsin, where Nankai University was repeatedly bombed by aircraft and shelled by artillery. All of its library's 224,000 volumes except for the western literature collection—which had been removed before the attack—were completely destroyed by fire. In the same city, the Hopeh Institute of Technology, the National Peiyang Engineering College, the Normal College for Women, and the College of Commerce and Law also suffered heavy damage to their libraries.¹¹ In Paoting, the capital of Hopeh Province, the libraries of the Hopeh Medical College and the Hopeh Agricultural College were reduced to rubble. In Peiping, the Japanese commandeered the National Tsinghua University Library—one of the best in the country—for a military hospital and shipped its western languages collection to Japan as spoils of war. Most of the universities in Peiping evacuated to the interior—the National University of Peking, the National University of Peiping, and the National Normal University among them—but all left behind their libraries' collections, totaling more than 400,000 volumes.¹²

A similar fate befell the libraries in Shanghai, Nanking, Soochow, and Hangchow. For centuries the areas around these cities had been among the country's most important cultural centers, and as a result there were many schools, learned institutions, and publishing houses, as well as academic, private, and governmental libraries with significant collections. In Shanghai the Municipal Library was seriously damaged by artillery fire and aerial bombardment. Of its ninety thousand volumes only a small portion of the most valuable books could be evacuated—the rest were lost. The National Chi Nan University Library was also ruined by the fighting, and nearly three-quarters of its fifty thousand volumes were destroyed. Other academic libraries suffering severe losses included those at Fu Tan University, the National Tung Chi University, Kwang Hua University, Great China University, the University of Shanghai, and the National Conservatory of Music. In Nanking the Sinological Library

of Kiangsu, famous for its rare Chinese books and manuscripts, was sacked. Japanese troops confiscated the library's priceless collection and spent several days moving it to their headquarters; then they demolished the building. The National Central Library managed to transfer a part of its reference and western languages collections to Chungking, but was forced to leave all of its Chinese books behind. The University of Nanking was able to transport only one-fifth of its 100,000 volumes to the interior when it evacuated. Taking into account all the government's departmental libraries located in Nanking, estimates of losses to the city's collections ran as high as 300,000 volumes. Hangchow Christian College was completely destroyed by fire, while the Chekiang Provincial Library at Hangchow and the Kiangsu Provincial Library at Chenkiang suffered heavy losses when looting Japanese troops entered these cities.¹³ Additionally, many famous private libraries and antiquarian book shops located in these areas were also ransacked by Japanese soldiers in their search for rare books and manuscripts. Ultimately the losses suffered by private collectors proved extremely difficult to estimate.¹⁴

Advancing deeper into central China and the coastal provinces of Kwangtung and Fukien, the *tsunami* of Japanese invasion engulfed more libraries. The Tsingtao College of Engineering Library in Shantung Province and the Amoy University Library in Fukien Province were both severely damaged by gunboat fire and aerial bombardment. The National Wuhan University, Hua Chung University, and Boone Library School had to move from Hankow to the interior, losing many of their books and much of their equipment on the long journey. In Hunan an air raid on the National Hunan University obliterated its five-year-old library.¹⁵ Heavy losses were also suffered by the National Sun Yat-sen University and the School of Arts and Letters, Law, and Sciences in Canton when the Japanese conquered that city.¹⁶

Damage to Chinese libraries and the loss of books during the war were overwhelming. An estimate made by the Chinese Library Association in 1939 stated that 2,500 of the 4,000 public and private libraries were complete losses. Moreover, the collections in these 2,500 war zone libraries had been many times larger than those of all the surviving libraries within the interior.¹⁷ Another report stated that 92 of the 114 institutions of higher education were either in the war zone, or in areas under Japanese domination. Of these 92, 54 were partially or completely destroyed, and only 27 were still in their original locations. Of those institutions that had evacuated, most had been unable to take their libraries with them.¹⁸ By 1939 it was estimated that 2.8 million of the 5.5 million volumes owned by all Chinese university and college libraries were lost.¹⁹

An Appeal to American Librarians

Even as the fighting raged, some determined Chinese librarians began efforts to rebuild their ravaged collections despite seemingly overwhelming adversity. Soon after the Chinese Library Association relocated to Changsha—the capital of Hunan Province—Tung-li Yuan, chairman of the association's executive board and director of the National Library in Peiping, wrote to Harrison Warwick Craver, president of the American Library Association, and to Carl Milam, executive secretary of the ALA, on 19 November 1937.²⁰ In these letters, Yuan advised the Americans that twenty-five Chinese academic libraries had been destroyed or seriously damaged and that most of the institutions that had evacuated to the interior were without their libraries. He asked if the ALA would organize a special committee to collect donations from American libraries and individuals for eventual shipment to China, and he added that a committee under the direction of the Ministry of Education had already been organized there to receive and distribute donations.

Yuan's letters were referred to the ALA's Committee on International Relations. Though the committee expressed its sympathy and recommended in a memo of 29 December 1937 that a relief effort should be planned immediately, both the committee's chair, James Thayer Gerould, and its vice-chair, Ruth Savord, suffered health problems which eventually forced them to withdraw from the committee, thereby delaying action on this recommendation. Additionally, the 29 December memo stipulated that neither Yuan's request nor the committee's deliberations be publicized, a decision that further delayed response from the ALA, as members outside the committee remained unaware of Yuan's plea.²¹

In the meantime, the city of Changsha had come under Japanese attack, forcing Yuan to evacuate with the Chinese Library Association to the Fang Ping-Shan Library in Hong Kong. On 27 May 1938, Yuan wrote to Milam requesting immediate aid from the ALA.²² He reported that despite the war, Chinese academic institutions were continuing to teach and to conduct research. Yuan stated that

While it may have been the feeling of some of our friends abroad that any campaign to collect books for Chinese libraries should be postponed until the armed conflict is over, yet the urgent demand for Western literature is so overwhelmingly compelling that we are inclined to think otherwise. The present hostilities are destined to be a long-drawn one [*sic*] and may drag on for a considerable time to come. In the meantime Chinese scholars have to be provided

with an adequate supply of material so that there shall be no intellectual stagnation and inactivity.²³

Yuan asked that his appeal be presented at a session during the ALA's sixtieth annual conference, scheduled to be held that June in Kansas City.

During the conference, Yuan's request was honored when Arthur Bostwick, associate librarian of the Saint Louis Public Library and honorary director of the Library Association of China, read the appeal to the third general session. In response, President-Elect Milton J. Ferguson declared that the Chinese appeal for books would be taken to librarians throughout the United States.²⁴

On 15 July Milam issued a memo to the ALA's Committee on International Relations, which included a prepared statement requesting books for Chinese libraries.²⁵ About this time his office also developed an arrangement with the Smithsonian Institution in which the Smithsonian's International Exchange Service agreed to act as a central receiving point for materials destined for China and to send them to Hong Kong. Milam's activities came at an opportune time, as the committee was about to acquire a new chair.

By August J. Periam Danton, librarian of Temple University, had been appointed chair of the International Relations Committee, relieving Althea Warren, who had inherited the post upon the withdrawal of Gerould and Savord. In a memo to committee members dated 11 August, Danton announced his plans to publish Yuan's appeal in several nationally prominent periodicals and newspapers in addition to various library journals.²⁶

Danton's decision to publicize the appeal for China was not the first of such efforts, however. The March 1938 issue of the *Wilson Bulletin* carried Yuan's statement describing the situation in China and asking for help from American librarians.²⁷ In June 1938 Librarian of Congress Herbert Putnam requested donations for Chinese libraries in the *Bulletin of the American Library Association* and in *Library Journal*.²⁸

In September the committee mailed a form letter announcing the "Books for China" campaign from 1 October 1938 until 1 January 1939 to 128 academic libraries, 98 public libraries, 81 learned societies, 36 publishers, and 5 university presses.²⁹ In this letter the committee asked donors to send duplicates or new items to the Smithsonian at their own expense, packing them in wooden crates suitable for reshipment overseas at a maximum of 300 pounds per crate. The committee also sent press releases announcing the Books for China campaign to the Associated Press, United Press International, the International News Service, and ten widely read magazines. Special notices also appeared in the October 1938 issues of *Library Journal*, the *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, and the *Wilson Bulletin*.³⁰ To encourage donations of books in a more

publicly visible way, an honorary committee of prominent Americans and Chinese was organized that included such notables as Pearl S. Buck, Nobel prize-winning author of *The Good Earth*; Henry Robinson Luce, founder of *Time*, *Life*, *Fortune*, and *Sports Illustrated* magazines; Mrs. John Alden Carpenter, wife of the composer; the Reverend Harry Emerson Fosdick; and celebrated Chinese scholars Hu Shih and Lin Yutang.

The form letter and press releases drew many responses, and by October the Macmillan Company was preparing 153 titles in 236 copies for shipment.³¹ Danton also received word from Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, and the National Research Council that they were shipping materials "at once."³² The December 1938 issues of the *Bulletin of the American Library Association* and the *Wilson Bulletin* carried reports from Danton indicating twenty-eight donors had contributed 5,000 books, periodicals, and pamphlets, and urging more readers to donate.³³ In a letter to Yuan dated 28 December, Danton mentioned that he was preparing a statement for the ALA's 1939 midwinter meeting to report more than 11,000 donations.³⁴

Although the Books for China campaign was originally intended to run for only three months, materials continued to arrive at the Smithsonian after January 1939. Encouraged by this response, Danton published another appeal in the May 1939 issue of *Library Journal* in which he also reported that 15,500 items had been contributed by fifty-five donors.³⁵ By the end of the year, 24,000 items had been given to the Books for China campaign by sixty donors.³⁶

The campaign was also meeting with success in its efforts to ship the donations to China. The May 1939 issue of the *Bulletin of the American Library Association* carried a letter from Yuan stating that the first shipment of thirty-six boxes of books had been received in Hong Kong and was being processed. Yuan also expressed the gratitude of his fellow Chinese librarians for their American friends' generosity.³⁷

The Smithsonian continued shipping donations into the next year, while Yuan's organization sent the books from Hong Kong to the interior by book post. Along with a letter to Danton dated 11 May 1940, Yuan included a list of forty-one institutions of higher education located in Hong Kong and in twenty-three cities in ten interior provinces that had received shipments of donated books. He also indicated that books intended for those public libraries destroyed by the Japanese were being stored in Hong Kong with the intent of distributing them after the fighting ceased.³⁸

Years of Hardship

Japanese military leaders had planned to conquer all of China within three months of the invasion. The vastness of the country and the

unexpected determination of its citizens' resistance denied them this objective, however. Though they continued to capture new territory, constant guerrilla attacks slowed their advance.

With their campaign bogging down, Japanese strategists decided to force Chiang's government to surrender by besieging Chungking and, if possible, by attacking the city directly. In November 1939, Nanning in Kwangsi Province—the major railhead for shipping supplies from Indochina to Chungking—was captured. By June 1940 the Japanese had reached Ichang, just 240 miles northeast of Chungking. This position provided Japanese bombers with a strategic base from which they easily attacked the wartime capital day and night.

Despite the loss of Nanning, Chungking continued to receive supplies via its most important and most direct route—the Burma Road. An outstanding feat of engineering, the Burma Road had been built by the Chinese in just one year (1937–1938) to link Kunming in Yunnan Province to a major rail center in Lashio, Burma, through more than seven hundred miles of rugged mountainous terrain.

Their need for petroleum and other war materiel eventually compelled the Japanese to attack more nations and their territories, including Singapore and other British protectorates on the Malay Peninsula. On 7 December 1941, aircraft of Japan's carrier fleet raided the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor. At almost the same time, Japanese forces also attacked the British Crown colony of Hong Kong, which fell on 25 December. In addition, all previously neutral foreign concessions in Peiping, Tientsin, Shanghai, and Canton were seized. With the expansion of their campaign throughout Asia and the Pacific, Japanese forces were at last able to close the Burma Road on 29 April 1942. With the fall of Burma and the closure of the road, supplies for Chungking could come solely from India via the American airlift route over the Himalayas, popularly known as "flying the Hump."

Libraries felt the effects of these developments in several ways. Previously unmolested colleges and universities attached to foreign missions or organizations were now forced to close or evacuate. Many of those that relocated—such as Yen Ching University and Peking Union Medical College—were unable to take their libraries with them. With the capture of Hong Kong, Fang Ping-Shan Library and the city's other libraries, as well as the libraries of those institutions that had evacuated to Hong Kong earlier—such as Lingnan University and Kwangtung University—fell into enemy hands. In the Japanese campaign to close the Burma Road, Kunming was attacked, and the National Southwestern Associated University—newly formed by the temporary merger of several universities that had evacuated there—lost its entire library in an air raid.

Teaching and study continued despite the worsening situation, though the lack of materials drove professors to extreme measures. The few textbooks at hand were taken apart and their pages posted on bulletin boards to allow more students to use them simultaneously. When no materials on a certain subject could be found, professors posted their lecture notes.³⁹

In the interior cities where refugee colleges and universities had relocated, local libraries were intact, although they were faced with demands that far outstripped their facilities, services, and collections. In Szechwan Province, West China Union University at Chengtu accommodated four refugee schools—the University of Nanking, Ginling Women's College, Cheelee University, and Yen Ching University. While the University of Nanking and Ginling Women's College had managed to bring a few books with them, the other two universities had arrived without any library materials. West China Union's library had to serve not only its own faculty and students, and those of the four schools it was hosting, but also patrons from Peking Union Medical College Nursing School and West China Theological Seminary. G. L. Den, head librarian at West China Union, described the library's conditions in poignant terms:

Readers during the year [1944], exclusive of visitors, totaled 253,142; the largest number in any one day, 2,354. The number of books and periodicals used for reading in the library was 315,463—the largest number in any one day, 3,215, exclusive of dictionaries and encyclopedias. . . . Our reading rooms and stacks are overcrowded. . . . Our books are worn out and the chairs are broken because of constant use by so many people.⁴⁰

What library materials did exist were usually outdated. P. S. Tang of Kunming wrote of this situation to the editor of *Science*:

We have been cut off from the external world since 1941. No new journals or magazines have reached us, except microfilms . . . but they are few and far-scattered, and after all, microfilms are microfilms.⁴¹

As this essay has demonstrated, librarians in the United States attempted to help their Chinese colleagues early on, but their efforts had been hampered by the limited public interest and governmental support of a noncombatant nation. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and America's subsequent declaration of war, the ALA was able to approach a number of newly established special wartime agencies for funds and other assistance.

In June 1941 the ALA received a grant of \$50,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation to purchase periodical subscriptions on behalf of libraries in overrun countries within the European and Pacific theaters, including China. A second grant of \$60,000 followed in December. Responsibility for this project was assigned to the newly formed Books for Devastated Libraries in War Areas Committee of the International Relations Board (formerly the Committee on International Relations). The new committee identified and purchased important scholarly and scientific American journals, and stored them in American libraries to await shipment after the war.⁴²

In the summer of 1942, the China Foundation gave funds to the ALA to purchase and store eighty periodicals on behalf of the National Library of Peiping, and thirty-two periodicals for the Geological Survey of China. This project was also undertaken by the committee, now called the Committee on Aid to Libraries in War Areas, and the materials were stored at the University of Rochester.⁴³ The Committee on the Orient and South Pacific was also formed in 1942 under the International Relations Board and was chaired by Charles Harvey Brown, librarian of Iowa State College and a former ALA president (1941–1942), renowned for his activities in international librarianship.⁴⁴

At the same time two additional figures appeared on the scene, John K. Fairbank and his wife, Wilma. John Fairbank was a professor of Chinese history at Harvard, but upon America's declaration of war he was granted a leave to work for the State Department, and his wife joined the department with him. Wilma Fairbank was attached to the department's newly formed Division of Cultural Relations in Washington, while John Fairbank was assigned to the American Embassy in Chungking as a special assistant to the ambassador.⁴⁵ In addition to his embassy duties, he also held the titles of China Director for the United States Government Interdepartmental Committee for the Acquisition of Foreign Publications and Far Eastern Representative of the Library of Congress.⁴⁶ In these capacities he was responsible for collecting Chinese and Japanese publications for shipment to the United States. As a result of their activities, the Fairbanks developed extensive contacts with Milam and Brown.

The International Relations Board and its Committee on the Orient and South Pacific received a joint memo from John Fairbank and Yuan early in 1943. This memo presented several ideas for better development of Sino-American intellectual relations. Among these points were the purchase of materials for more Chinese libraries by the ALA, the purchase of Chinese publications by American libraries through the Library of Congress, and student and faculty exchanges between the two

countries.⁴⁷ Fairbank and Yuan also included with their memo a purchasing plan proposed by the National Library of Peiping.

Milam responded to the memo in a letter to Wilma Fairbank dated 24 March 1943, that included comments from the committee both collectively and individually. Among the collective comments were:

All of us have welcomed the opportunity to read these stimulating documents. We recognize the importance and far-reaching implications of the proposals which are being made. We shall be proud as well as pleased to have a modest share in those undertakings to which we can make some contribution.⁴⁸

Individual comments included statements from William Warner Bishop regarding the state of Chinese libraries: "I believe our Chinese colleagues should give us at an early date some approximate number of libraries to be restored;" from Brown regarding exchanges: "I should like to propose that the ALA authorize a study of how the exchanges with Chinese libraries can be made effective and how we can get to these libraries the books they actually need;" and again from Brown regarding donations: "I do not believe it is satisfactory to select as gifts any books that may come in and ship them off to China after the war. The selections should be systematic and we should not repeat the experience of some years ago." Echoing Bishop's comment, Milam asked that Yuan provide a comprehensive report on the state of Chinese libraries since the Japanese invasion. He also asked if an American librarian could be sent to China to assist Fairbank and Yuan.⁴⁹

The Fairbank-Yuan memo moved Brown to action. On 11 June he sent Milam a list of suggestions for developing Sino-American bibliographical relations. Brown noted the success of such relations with Latin American countries through President Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policies, and he proposed that the same kind of effort also should be made on behalf of China. He foresaw that China would play an important role in the post-war world and strongly urged that the good will between the two countries be further developed immediately in order to lay a foundation for future understanding. Brown was convinced that books and libraries would be important parts of this effort.

Brown stated three objectives for the committee:

- (1) To aid in the interchange of ideas and knowledge between China and the U.S., in so far as printed materials, including films, may be of service.
- (2) To assist Chinese libraries in their own functioning and obtaining American publications of value to China's

industrial and cultural development. (3) To aid American libraries in promoting an understanding of China and more definitely to aid them in obtaining Chinese publications.⁵⁰

Among his suggestions for attaining these objectives were categorizing Chinese universities by their special teaching and research areas; matching specific Chinese schools with similar American schools that would be responsible for acquiring and holding materials for them; arranging the immediate deposit of special government documents, experiment station bulletins, and similar materials with those American libraries for eventual shipment to Chinese libraries; and determining what scientific periodicals American libraries could donate to their Chinese counterparts. Brown envisioned creation of an ALA executive officer in Washington to coordinate these efforts with such private and governmental organizations as the China Institute, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the State Department, and he proposed that this officer be responsible for securing the project's funding.⁵¹

On 18 June a meeting to discuss the Fairbank-Yuan memo and the National Library of Peiping's purchasing plan was held in the State Department. Among those attending were Wilma Fairbank and Willys R. Peck of the department's Division of Cultural Relations; Arthur W. Hummell and Marion A. Milczewski of the Library of Congress; Mortimer Graves of the American Council of Learned Societies; George Taylor of the department's Office of War Information; Chinese librarian Tsai-yu Hsiao; Harry M. Lydenberg, chairman of the ALA's International Relations Office, Milam; and Brown.

Topics under discussion at this meeting were the acquisition of materials for China, restoration of Chinese libraries, exchange of personnel, and a point-by-point update on progress toward the objectives of the memo and the purchasing plan. Hummell reported that the Library of Congress could not coordinate cooperative purchasing of Chinese publications for American libraries, and the ALA was suggested as an alternative. Milam recommended that a program similar to the Books for Latin America Project be instituted for China; he repeated his request that Yuan provide a report on the condition of Chinese libraries after five years of fighting; and he expressed his hope that Fairbank and Yuan would invite an American librarian to China to aid them.⁵²

Throughout June and July Brown conducted a series of interviews with experts on China and other individuals whose insights were of potential value to the program. The interviewees included Hu Shih, a famous scholar and former Chinese ambassador to the United States; Pearl S. Buck, author and member of the East-West Association; Wu Yi-fang, president of Ginling Women's College; Archie Lockhead, president of

the Chinese-owned Universal Trading Corporation; William Sloane, manager of the Trade Department of the publishing firm Henry Holt and Company; Kinn-wei Shaw, head of the Standard Import and Export Company of China; Chih Meng, executive secretary of the China Institute in America; C. L. Hsia of the Chinese News Service; C. O. Arndt of the Office of Education; and several recently arrived Chinese professors. These interviews gave Brown information that clarified his ideas and intensified his already keen enthusiasm for the project.

While Brown conducted his interviews, Wilma Fairbank was arranging an agreement with the Library of Congress to make the library's duplicates accessible to Chinese scholars visiting the United States. Under this agreement the scholars would be permitted to select materials on behalf of the libraries with which they were affiliated. On 20 August the library accepted her proposal and agreed to store the selections, with the understanding that they would be shipped at the recipients' expense once normal transportation was restored in China.⁵³

Meanwhile, Milam recommended that Brown spend three or four months in Washington in order to have direct contact with those individuals and organizations most likely to help the project's development. He requested funds for Brown's stay in Washington from the Rockefeller Foundation, but his request was denied.⁵⁴ In November Wilma Fairbank requested \$2,000 from the State Department to allow Brown to travel to various American universities to make arrangements for exchanges, donations, and the storage of materials. Since shipment of exchanged and donated materials could not be made until after the war, and at this time State Department funds applied only to war emergency activities, her request was denied.⁵⁵

Brown had already invested a good deal of time in the project. On 15 November he expressed his frustration in a letter to Althea Warren, president of the ALA:

For the last six months I have given over half my time and the equivalent of a full-time secretary to work on the various features of the China program. It is impossible to go along under the present arrangements. . . . This library cannot contribute any more to work such as this under present conditions.⁵⁶

Brown also wrote to Wilma Fairbank that day:

It is impossible to develop a project without funds. . . . I do not think Iowa State College is in a position to contribute any more than it has. . . . There will be no funds to pay Mrs. Dunbar

[Brown's secretary] for this work. I shall pay her personally for what she has done to date.⁵⁷

With important contacts made and new ideas developing daily, Brown found the frustration brought about by lack of support almost overwhelming, and he contemplated resigning. In a letter to Lydenberg he stated,

I hate to give up the work on China, but I can't see much point in going ahead with it unless some funds are available for the expenses. The program is now pretty well set up and we could go right ahead, but the hindrances to the progress of the program due to lack of any expense money are so great that I feel my efforts can yield more results in other fields. . . . I shall not resign from the Board, however, until I have finished the revision of the Outline, etc. I don't want to serve on the Board in a passive capacity when I have such strong convictions on what ought to be done.⁵⁸

Among the projects Brown intended to complete before resigning was a plan for the joint purchase of Chinese publications by American libraries. Under this plan, a committee of Chinese librarians organized by Yuan would act as agent for a group of American libraries in selecting and purchasing Chinese materials. Serial publications issued by research institutions, learned societies, and selected governmental departments; books on Sinology, economics, and statistics pertaining to wartime China; and scientific and technical publications were to be given first priority.⁵⁹ These materials would be stored in Chungking to await shipment to the United States after the war. By the end of November, Brown had worked out the details of this plan, including an agreement form which was sent with a cover letter to forty-three academic, public, and special libraries likely to have an interest in Chinese materials, inviting their participation.⁶⁰ Though it had been Brown's intention to resign upon the completion of these activities, events were moving in a way that would cause him to stay on.

Putting the Plans into Operation

In January 1944 Milam received Yuan's report on the state of Chinese libraries which he had requested the previous March. In addition to describing the situation from the beginning of the Japanese invasion in 1937 to the end of 1942, Yuan included a section in which he proposed plans for Chinese library development after the war.

Brown's reactions to Yuan's report reflect his mounting frustration:

This report made me thoroughly ashamed. We have proposed a number of projects but have made little progress since November. . . . We were early in outlining what ought to be done for China. We have been slow in really putting any of our plans into operation.⁶¹

Though his comments were rather negative, Yuan's memo appears to have rekindled Brown's determination to help in some meaningful way, and he continued his activities on the joint purchasing plan. The strongest incentive for Brown to remain on the board, however, was about to materialize.

At the end of January the Fairbanks met with David H. Stevens of the Rockefeller Foundation to discuss various State Department activities. During this meeting Wilma Fairbank asked if the ALA's request for funds to support Brown's work had been received recently and found that it had not. The following week she wrote to Stevens describing the difficulties that the Division of Cultural Relations was experiencing in trying to answer Chinese requests for materials without Brown's help.

We, in this office, are in a quandary regarding the whole matter of sending publications to China. The demand is, as you know, great. We are flooded with a constantly increasing correspondence not only from China, begging for books, but also from agencies in this country (including Chinese government agencies) which in some cases have money for the purpose of supplying books, but need professional advice and leadership in tackling this problem. Transportation into China is very tight, but there is a possibility that if carefully selected books can be got to India in moderate quantities by sea, arrangements can be made to forward them by plane to China. The questions arise: What books shall be sent? To whom? By whom? What can be done to stockpile duplicates for China in libraries here? What facilities are there for training Chinese librarians here? These questions require professional investigation and advice.⁶²

Her letter went on to stress that Brown was exactly the right person for this job. She cited his devotion to the task, and described the handicaps he suffered due to lack of funds. She also explained that State Department war emergency funds could not be used to support Brown because the project would not be completed until after the war. Her summary of the situation was succinct:

Hence our quandary. We have funds to buy and ship books; we need professional help before we can buy and ship; we cannot use our funds to get that professional help.⁶³

Through her letter, Mrs. Fairbank paved the way for Milam to submit a second request for a Rockefeller Foundation grant, which he did on 25 February. On 2 March Milam sent her a letter typed in all capital letters—the visual equivalent of shouting the good news that \$2,000 had finally been granted by the Rockefeller Foundation to support Brown's work.⁶⁴

Arrangements for purchasing Chinese materials through Yuan's committee were finalized in March. Thirteen libraries agreed to join the program, with the understanding that each would contribute \$1,000 to the joint fund. The participants included the New York Public Library, Harvard, Yale, Columbia, and Northwestern universities, and the universities of California, Chicago, Hawaii, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Washington. A coordinating committee was appointed, consisting of Harold L. Leupp, librarian of the University of California, and James T. Babb, assistant librarian at Yale, with Ralph A. Beals, director of the University of Chicago's library, as chair, and Brown as an *ex officio* member representing the ALA.⁶⁵

The program's implementation was hindered by rampant inflation in Chungking coupled with an unrealistic official exchange rate for American and Chinese currencies; for though the Chungking black market exchanged one American dollar at a rate of \$100 to 200 Chinese yuan, the official rate was only \$1 to twenty yuan.⁶⁶ While Brown sought ways to obtain better rates, the committee delayed sending money to Yuan.

Some progress was made in supplying books to Chinese libraries, however. In addition to the ongoing periodical purchasing program begun with the Rockefeller Foundation grant in 1941, the foundation gave the ALA \$100,000 on 5 April to launch another project to select and purchase reference books published between 1939 and 1943 for libraries in all war areas. Implementation of this project was also assigned to the Committee on Aid to Libraries in War Areas, and again the books were stored at the Library of Congress for peacetime shipment. The committee designated China as one of the major recipient countries for this program as well.⁶⁷

With donations and purchases for Chinese libraries piling up in various American institutions, and with desperate pleas for books and periodicals flooding into the ALA and the State Department from Chinese professors, librarians, and university administrators, it was obvious that efforts had to be made to ship some materials to China despite the

tremendous difficulties involved. On 7 April John Fairbank, recently appointed Deputy Director of the Office of War Information's Far East Section, organized a meeting in New York to discuss coordinating shipments to China. A new committee—the Coordinating Committee on Book Shipments to China—was formed of representatives from the Office of War Information (OWI), the State Department, the ALA, and the Council on Books in Wartime. The committee suggested that Brown collect information on what the various Chinese libraries needed most. Based on what he learned from this information, he was to draw up priority lists for types of materials to be shipped and to develop shipping quotas. The committee also urged that shipments be conveyed by all possible means—diplomatic air pouch, diplomatic sea pouch, Army Post Office delivery to specific persons in China, individual travelers, and bulk sea mail to Calcutta for transshipment to China by chartered aircraft.⁶⁸

The first opportunity to ship books to China came when the airplane for Vice-President Henry Wallace's visit to Chungking was assigned a 600-pound cargo allotment for the State Department's Division of Cultural Relations. An overjoyed Wilma Fairbank wrote to Brown on 6 May describing the materials about to be sent:

We are going to send a small number of books from the Library of Congress duplicates selected by the representatives of various Chinese institutions, as a token representative of that project. I am also giving a small allotment to each of the five professors who are here at the department's invitation. In addition we are sending a big lot of textbooks and a number of recent issues of technical and scientific journals. These things are all being addressed to universities, institutions, and organizations in China which are rather widely spread. I hope that even though many of the individual packages will be small the effect will be felt widespread.⁶⁹

The plane arrived at Chungking on 20 May carrying gifts from the Division of Cultural Relations, "including books, maps, motion-pictures, art reproductions, and laboratory equipment . . . ninety-four separate consignments to Chinese educational institutions in response to requests, or to the Embassy for distribution."⁷⁰

One of the packages prepared by the ALA went to Boone Library School—China's first school of library science. Though founded in Wuchung by Mary Elizabeth Wood, an American missionary, the school had evacuated that city and taken refuge in Chungking. A letter to Milam from Samuel T. Y. Seng, Boone's director, gives some indication of the gratitude with which the books were received:

I wish you could be here to watch what joy we had when we unpacked the books! We had not had any books from America for four long years! These books, though few in number, are well selected and will be very useful to the staff and students in their class work. I can assure you that their happiness will be more real than I can put in words when they actually use them! You will be pleased to hear that one of my colleagues would like to translate one of these books into Chinese.⁷¹

On the vice-president's return flight, the plane was loaded with one hundred pounds of Chinese publications that Yuan had bought. Upon their arrival in Washington, these materials were taken to the State Department for distribution to the thirteen libraries participating in the joint purchasing program. Since the committee had decided not to send Yuan the first \$1,000 until early June, he had sent these books at his own expense in the hopes of expediting the program.⁷²

A second allotment of \$1,000 reached Yuan in September. Each time a reasonably satisfactory exchange rate was secured, with the first exchange at \$1 to 130 yuan, and the second at \$1 to 210 yuan. Throughout the program the joint committee regularly received detailed financial statements.

Shipping books to China was extremely difficult. In June Wilma Fairbank applied to the Rockefeller Foundation for funds to support sending a few books each week via diplomatic pouch, but her request was denied.⁷³ For some time squeezing allotments onto special flights originally chartered for other purposes seemed to be the only possible way to ship. In August General Patrick Hurley's plane took 380 pounds of books, journals, and small tools to Chungking. In September a flight to Chungking arranged for General Joseph Stillwell carried about 300 pounds of books and medicine.⁷⁴

In late September Brown learned that the U.S. Post Office was offering a new service to send small parcels weighing four pounds or less to China at \$1.50 per pound. Further investigation revealed that these packages had to cross the Atlantic and the Mediterranean by ship, then go overland to China through Turkestan. Packages sent this way would take about a year to reach China—assuming that they were not destroyed, lost, or stolen along the way. Given the precarious journey involved, the State Department advised Brown not to use this service.⁷⁵

In March 1944 Yuan's response to Milam's inquiry about sending an American librarian to China arrived, stating, "We shall most heartily welcome American librarians if they can arrange a visit to this country."⁷⁶ Later, at Milam's request, Yuan arranged for the Chinese Ministry of Education to extend an official invitation for such a visit.⁷⁷ An

eight-month visitation plan sponsored by the State Department was developed, and selection of an American librarian was assigned to Milam and Brown. They eventually chose Carl White, librarian of Columbia University. On 9 August White met in Washington with the individuals involved in the China projects of both the State Department and the ALA to discuss the objectives of his visit and the preliminary activities he needed to undertake.⁷⁸

While White was busy making preparations, his trip was postponed several times. These delays were due in part to inefficiency caused by reorganization within the State Department and in part by the scarcity of military flights to Chungking that could safely accommodate civilians. Realizing that he could be facing a long wait, White spent his time in Washington promoting State Department sponsorship of a new Books for China program.

After several months of campaigning, White wrote to Brown on 6 December telling him of “bright prospects” for funding the new program.

As I think you know, when this idea was first proposed and it began to be considered favorably, \$20,000 was all that it was thought it would be “tactful” to ask for. I held out for more, suggesting around \$60,000. The formal request, which as I understand it we are nearly certain to get, is now set at \$50,000, including about 7% for HML [Harry M. Lydenberg] for work and purchasing and any other administrative costs not borne by the Dept. It is my understanding—and I made a point of this—that shipping costs will not come out of this sum. That will be a sizable figure.⁷⁹

The final contract for a new two-year program to purchase books for Chinese libraries was signed by the State Department and the ALA in December. The department gave \$50,000 to the ALA, which in turn assumed responsibility for preparing lists of those books and periodicals most urgently needed in China, purchasing and storing these publications, and shipping them to China using the facilities of the department and of the Chinese government wherever possible.⁸⁰

In January 1945, after more than four months’ delay, White’s trip to China was officially canceled by the State Department.⁸¹ The new Books for China project, to which White had made important contributions, developed steadily, however, and on 31 January a meeting was held to discuss this project. Participants included Brown and Lydenberg from the ALA, and Peck and Wilma Fairbank from the State Department. It was agreed that four categories of materials would be purchased: books in cultural and scientific fields published since 1937, with about 60 percent in the pure and applied sciences and the rest in the social sciences

and humanities; important recently published reference works; illustrated books and maps for people unfamiliar with English; and current periodicals. It was also decided that purchasing would begin immediately, using the first \$25,000 allotted for 1945. The State Department agreed to give the ALA a list of designated recipients with indications of the number of copies to be purchased for each. In addition, the department would contact the embassy in Chungking to learn what receiving and distributing facilities the embassy had, or could arrange.⁸²

Purchasing was carried out by the ALA's International Relations Office. Located in the Library of Congress, this office maintained close contact with the nearby State Department while Brown, residing in Iowa, coordinated compilation of purchasing lists. A serial number was assigned to each book purchased, and a bookplate bearing the Seal of the United States and the inscription, "From the People of the United States of America," was pasted to the upper-left corner of the lining paper inside the front board.

The books were organized into twenty-pound lots, wrapped in waterproof paper, and placed in large wooden crates for shipping. These crates were transported to Calcutta by sea, where they waited for flights to Chungking over "the Hump."

At almost the same time the State Department and the ALA began the new Books for China project, Yuan arrived in the United States. He had come to develop closer contacts with the various individuals and organizations helping Chinese libraries, and to attend the United Nations conference to be held in San Francisco from April to June as an official of the Chinese delegation. From January to April, Yuan visited various universities on the East Coast and in the Midwest, met with ALA and State Department officials in Washington, and talked with representatives of several organizations in New York that were involved in



***from the
People
of the
United States
of America***

Bookplate mounted in all materials donated through the Books for China programs.

rehabilitating Chinese libraries and institutions of higher education. He also worked with Brown to prepare a plan for distributing the publications purchased with the Rockefeller Foundation grant and the materials donated by individual American libraries. In this plan they proposed the formation of a new committee, to be called the Chinese Committee for the Distribution of Books, under the auspices of the Academia Sinica. Eventually this committee consisted of eleven members drawn from prominent scholars, librarians, and government officials including Y. K. Chen, president of the University of Nanking; S. R. Chow, president of the National Wuhan University; Yu-hsun Wu, president of the National Central University; Lih-wu Han, vice-minister of Education; and Fu-Tsung Chiang, director of the National Central Library. Wen-Hao Wong, China's vice-premier and a leading geologist, became the committee's chair, and Yuan served as its executive secretary.⁸³

Yuan and Brown also drew up a set of principles the committee was to follow in distributing the materials. These principles directed that curricula, specialization, and number of students be considered when assigning books to academic libraries. Libraries whose collections had been destroyed were given priority for materials published before 1940, while libraries holding relatively complete sets of periodicals had priority for those issues published during the war in order to fill gaps. Distribution to public libraries was restricted to those whose patrons could utilize materials in western languages. Duplicate distribution was to be avoided for those libraries receiving aid from the Chinese government or from other American programs.⁸⁴

With the war winding down in 1945, the military situation in China improved. Book shipments were still unable to make any real progress, however, as the airlift over "the Hump" remained dedicated largely to transporting war materiel to Chungking. In March the State Department assigned Wilma Fairbank to the American Embassy in Chungking as its cultural officer with responsibility for expediting book shipments and arranging distribution.

Distributing the Donations

Wilma Fairbank arrived in Chungking in May 1945 and flew to Calcutta shortly thereafter to observe the book shipment operation there. In a memo to Peck from Calcutta dated 7 June, she reported that two groups of book crates were being transshipped to China. The crates of the first group—sent by OWI—carried the books and journals purchased by the ALA with the Rockefeller Foundation grant. The second group contained materials from the State Department's Books for China project.

Wilma Fairbank reported it took about six to ten weeks for the crates to arrive at Calcutta by sea from New York. After unloading, the OWI materials were stored temporarily in one of five OWI warehouses, while the State Department's crates were conveyed to the American Consulate and piled high in offices, lavatories, and an unused kitchen. She found that there was usually no delay in shipping OWI's books to China, since that office had a regular monthly cargo allotment—varying from twenty to twenty-five tons—on military transport flights to China. By the time of Fairbank's visit, OWI had sent about two tons of books to Chungking. On the other hand, she found that since the State Department had no regular air cargo allotment, far fewer of their crates were being shipped. Thus she recommended that the department utilize OWI's facilities.⁸⁵

The first shipment of books purchased by the State Department arrived at the American Embassy in Chungking on 15 November 1945. Two hundred and sixty books were distributed to twelve universities in the Chengtu area of Szechwan Province. The books were transported to Chengtu from Chungking in a truck operated by the United States Information Agency (USIA, OWI's successor) and distributed by USIA officers in accordance with Wilma Fairbank's request.⁸⁶

At the same time, Fairbank and two other Americans drove a truck from Chungking to Chiating, also in Szechwan Province, where the National Wuhan University had taken refuge. There they presented one hundred books to the university's library.⁸⁷ A report from the embassy vividly depicts the occasion:

The library (in a Confucian temple) was a scene of public rejoicing as the librarian held up each book in turn and called out the title to a group of faculty and students crowding the reading room. All the books had been published since 1940 and they were the first new books to reach the library in at least five years. Dean Kwei of the Science School of Wuhan remarked "This is the greatest thing that has happened to Wuhan in a long time."⁸⁸

Another delivery of books was made by Wilma Fairbank on 17 January 1946, this time to Kunming where the National Yunnan University and the National Southwest Associated University were located. A description of the book presentation at the latter university related in an embassy report is particularly telling:

At the National Southwest Associated University the President gave a large tea in honor of the occasion, and invited for the purpose the heads of all departments of the university. The books were set out on a table and the professors, most of whom had seen no new

books from America for six or seven years, became so absorbed in reading them that the President found it difficult to draw attention to the social occasion.⁸⁹

On 31 May Lydenberg requested another \$50,000 from the State Department to extend the ALA's program. The department approved his request on 27 June, stating, "at the present time, when personal intercourse, including the interchange of professors and students, is rendered difficult because of war conditions, the selection and supplying of printed material to China constitutes one of the most efficacious means of promoting cultural relations with that country."⁹⁰ Under Brown's direction a number of special bibliographies had been prepared for book ordering and were in use. With the grant's extension, these bibliographies were enlarged, more were compiled to an eventual total of twenty, and additional copies of the titles they cited were purchased.⁹¹

With the war's end on 14 August 1945, Chinese libraries that had evacuated to the interior began returning to their original locations. Rehabilitating and developing their damaged collections naturally became a major concern. Word of the ALA's aid programs brought a flood of requests from Chinese librarians. The ALA responded in some cases by sending aid directly. In other cases, it was explained that supplies were being sent to China and would be distributed in due course by the American Embassy and by the Chinese Committee for the Distribution of Books. The embassy—which moved from Chungking to Nanking in March 1946—was responsible for distributing materials purchased with State Department funds, while the Chinese Committee for the Distribution of Books—which had been founded in Chungking in 1945, but moved to Shanghai the following year—had charge over books and periodicals purchased by the ALA's Program for Libraries in War Areas and also over materials donated by various American institutions.

Several organizations became involved in shipping library materials. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) assumed responsibility for delivering materials from the ALA's Project for Libraries in War Areas, while the American Book Center (later renamed the United States International Book Association) was contracted to wrap, pack, and send publications bought with the State Department grant. Donated books—both new gifts and library duplicates—were also handled by the center. When the center dissolved in June 1947, part of the work was taken over by the Stechert-Hafner Company, and part by the Smithsonian.

Though book shipments did not reach China on a significant scale until late 1946, concern that the Chinese Committee for the Distribution of Books would favor the national libraries—especially those maintaining

a close relationship with the Ministry of Education—reached the ALA's headquarters during the summer of 1946.⁹² Most of the complaints came from Christian colleges founded by American missionaries. In November 1946 a letter to the ALA's International Relations Office from the Associated Boards of Christian Colleges in China, headquartered in New York, cited a cablegram from their representative in Shanghai:

ALL BOOKS GOING EIGHTEEN SETS GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS TWO OF PRIVATE STOCK UNLESS AMERICAN ALLOCATION CHRISTIAN COLLEGES RECEIVE PRACTICALLY NOTHING.⁹³

The letter accused the Chinese Committee for the Distribution of Books of “giving not only priority but almost the whole works to government institutions” and suggested that “certain sets of books may be sent out assigned to these thirteen American universities.”⁹⁴

A similar complaint from the Associated Boards was sent to the American Book Center as well. As it was supported in part by some of the institutions involved, the center faced a dilemma in its obligations to those schools on the one hand, and on the other in the realization that designating a considerable part of the donations for specific recipients would quickly cause the program to break down. “The real answer,” wrote Laurence J. Kipp, executive director of the center to Brown in early December, “is of course revision on the part of the Chinese committee of its present policies of distribution.”⁹⁵

Brown wrote to Yuan on 24 December to express his concern that the Christian schools' needs were being ignored. Upon receiving his letter, Yuan sent a radiogram saying,

DONATED BOOKS NOT YET DISTRIBUTED. CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITIES RECEIVE EQUAL ATTENTION FROM COMMITTEE. REPORT FOLLOWS.⁹⁶

In his report, dated 13 January 1947, Yuan stated that the books and periodicals received from the ALA's War Areas Project had been withheld by the committee, awaiting coordination with the American Embassy and the Chinese Ministry of Education in distributing all donations from the United States and those materials purchased by the Chinese government. Yuan also stated that books shipped by the American Book Center had been distributed to various institutions, “Among them, 257 cases of books were designated to private colleges by the American Book Center and all of them have been sent to the National Christian Council, at 163 Yuan Ming Yuan Road, Shanghai as instructed.” Yuan assured

Brown that "our Committee shall observe strictly the 'Principles in Regard to the Distribution of Books in China' as approved by the ALA Board on International Relations."⁹⁷

On 31 January Yuan reported to Kipp that two shipments of 462 cases of donated books had reached Shanghai. All but seven cases were assigned to specific institutions, and the committee delivered the assigned cases immediately upon their receipt. They also received notification that four additional shipments totaling 330 cases had been sent, though nothing had arrived yet.⁹⁸ Yuan enclosed a copy of the "Memo on the Allocation of American Periodicals" with his letter, indicating that of 198 titles purchased by the Chinese Ministry of Education, 107 were also on the ALA's list, even though the ALA's order had been placed in 1939, and the Chinese order was from 1940. The memo stated that

if the Ministry decides to allocate subscriptions to national universities, the ALA periodicals should be distributed to private universities which have good collections of western books. But, in principle, the National Library of Peiping and the National Central Library should have priority; i.e., those not on the Ministry's list should be reserved for these two libraries, while they should also have the 1939 issues of the 107 periodicals found on both lists.⁹⁹

Due to an accident, Brown had been hospitalized for three weeks and was unable to reply to Yuan until 13 February when he wrote:

It was never the intention of the ALA, as you know by the Tentative Suggestions we sent you, that the distribution of books and periodicals sent over by the ALA and the American Book Center should be limited to national libraries. Yet apparently this impression has gone out, and we have had confirmation of this same impression from different sources. Possibly your Committee can correct this unfortunate impression.¹⁰⁰

He also told Yuan that distribution of materials from the State Department project was "left entirely to the American Embassy, . . . the only connection ALA had with it was to aid in the selection and binding." In closing, Brown stated,

I understand the difficult position the Committee is in and it has my sympathy. When there is such a great need for publications, there is sure to be some criticism. All we can do is to remove any legitimate cause for criticism, and I am sure your Committee will do so.¹⁰¹

On the same day Brown wrote the letter quoted above, Yuan wrote to Brown, reporting the arrival of the first shipment of books purchased with Rockefeller Foundation funds. He included with his letter a memo showing the distribution of these books among twenty Chinese libraries—six of which were private universities, and of these six, four were Christian schools.¹⁰² While it seems the needs of Christian schools were considered by the committee, it remains unclear if Brown's letter of 24 December had any actual influence.

Though Christian schools were receiving fair consideration, Yuan wrote to Brown once more about the matter. On 5 March he stated that it was premature to criticize the committee when it had barely begun its work. He again assured Brown that both Christian and national schools would receive equal attention from the committee. Yuan ended his letter by saying that owing to his various duties, he was considering resigning his post as the committee's executive secretary.¹⁰³

The tension created by the committee's alleged unfair treatment of Christian schools was finally dispelled, as the evidence—including first-hand information from Wilma Fairbank upon her return to Washington in April—indicated that equitable distribution of materials was taking place.¹⁰⁴ Despite this fact, by the following November Yuan had resigned his position on the committee.¹⁰⁵

Distribution of the materials purchased with State Department funds was delayed for at least a year because they had been misplaced in a USIS warehouse in New York.¹⁰⁶ The first shipment of these materials reached Shanghai in April, and shortly thereafter overdue crates of books began pouring into the city's warehouses. The sudden surge of shipments quickly overwhelmed the small embassy staff responsible for processing the books. To make matters worse, warehoused crates of books were mixed with stored shipments of other supplies, thus scattering them all over the city and making access very difficult for the staff. Despite these problems, they managed to identify and inventory the cases and their contents. To overcome the personnel shortage, materials were sent to USIS branch offices in several other cities including Nanking, Peiping, and Canton, with final distribution carried out by these offices as well.

By the end of 1947, approximately \$80,000 of the \$100,000 State Department grant had been spent on about 10,000 books and 2,000 periodicals, with orders for an additional 1,300 items in progress.¹⁰⁷ Copies ranging from one to ten each of 965 titles purchased with these funds had been received by the American Embassy. Half of the volumes had already been delivered to twenty-four institutions located throughout China.¹⁰⁸ Purchasing was completed by July 1948, while shipping and distribution did not end until the close of that year.

The ALA had purchased thirty-five sets of reference books with Rockefeller Foundation funds. Twenty-four of these sets consisted of American publications issued from 1939 to 1946, while the remaining eleven were designated as “large sets,” and contained an additional 227 expensive titles published from 1939 to 1943. Three standard sets of 1,028 titles each, and one “large set” consisting of 1,255 titles were sent to China.¹⁰⁹ Under the same project, China also received a set of American periodicals published from 1939 to 1946. The titles in this set included the most important journals published during each year of the war.¹¹⁰ By September 1947 all of these publications had been processed by the Chinese Committee for the Distribution of Books. They sent four sets of reference books to fifty-nine large libraries, allocated the periodicals to seventy-six institutions, and shipped all medical journals received to ten medical schools scattered throughout the country.¹¹¹

According to the committee’s report, about nine hundred cases of donated materials other than those purchased with Rockefeller Foundation funds had been received by the end of September 1947. These materials—consisting of newly purchased items and duplicates—had been donated by various American libraries and organizations, including the ALA and the Library of Congress, and more than half of them were designated for specific institutions. Distribution and delivery of these materials were close to completion by the time the committee submitted its final report.¹¹²

Epilogue

With distribution of all donations coming to an end, Brown and Milam began planning a new project in which American librarians would go to China to aid restoration and further development of library operations and services. The inspiration for this plan came from the objectives of the Fairbank-Yuan memo, and from Brown’s proposal to establish bibliographical relations between China and the United States. It was clear to Brown that the needs of Chinese librarians in the postwar period would be “not so much for books which are being supplied through Chinese government appropriations as well as by the American government and organizations, but help, assistance, and advice in maintaining an orderly system of libraries.”¹¹³

In November 1947 Brown received an invitation from General Douglas MacArthur through the War Department to go to occupied Japan and join a group of consultants assisting the Department of the Army in developing programs to rebuild that country. In addition to the stimulating challenges offered by this work, Brown also realized that the

position provided an excellent opportunity to go to China and investigate expanding the ALA's programs there.

While preparing to depart for Japan, Brown applied to the War Department for a month's leave in order to tour China under the Rockefeller Foundation's auspices.¹¹⁴ His application was approved, and he arrived in China on 8 January 1948, spending the rest of that month visiting Shanghai, Nanking, Peiping, Soochow, and Canton. Among his achievements during this visit were agreements made with the National University of Peking, the University of Nanking, the National Sun Yat-sen University in Canton, and the National College of Social Education in Shanghai that these institutions would receive American librarians as advisors to their libraries.

To help support this project Brown applied for a grant from the United States Education Foundation.¹¹⁵ He was very enthusiastic about this new program, and now that peace had been restored he was looking forward to seeing closer bibliographical relations develop between the two nations.

Unfortunately, this project and many other plans did not come to fruition. Following the Japanese surrender, civil war broke out in China. Soon after Brown's departure, the fighting intensified, and it became obvious that implementation of the new program would have to wait until the conflict was resolved. No one at the time could have guessed that further development of bibliographical relations between mainland China and the United States would remain in abeyance for the next twenty-five years.¹¹⁶

Notes

1. Teng-Yuan Chen, *[The Collection and Destruction of Books in Chinese History]* (Shanghai: China Commercial Press, Inc., 1936).

2. *Ibid.*, 15.

3. *Ibid.*, 157.

4. Presently named "Beijing," China's capital was called "Peiping" from 1911 to 1949, and frequently given in English as "Peking" during this time. Throughout this essay, the city is referred to as "Peiping." However, the National University of Peking used the English form in its name, and that tradition is reflected here. Note that this essay employs the conventional English spellings for Chinese names used by the United States National Geographical Survey at the time. These spellings also appear in the original documents examined and in published wartime maps and atlases. The authors have chosen to retain these spellings rather than employ the Wade-Giles or Pin Yin transliteration systems, as they remain historically appropriate for the period under discussion.

5. I-Cheng Liu, "The Provincial Libraries in China," in *Libraries in China: Papers Prepared on the Occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the Library Association of China* (Peiping: Library Association of China, 1935), 99.

6. K. T. Wu, "Library Progress in China," *Library Journal* 61 (15 December 1936): 950.
7. Ernest Schierlitz, "Das Chinesische Bibliothekswesen der Gegenwart," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* 54 (March 1937): 100–111.
8. *Ibid.*, 106, 108.
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