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Guide to the Yuan, T'ung-li (Yuan, Tongli) Papers 1940-1964



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.YUANT
Title	Yuan, T'ung-li (Yuan, Tongli). Papers
Date	1940-1964
Size	6.75 linear feet (11 boxes)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract Yuan T'ung-li (1895-1965) was a Chinese library administrator, bibliographer, and later consultant in Chinese literature and librarian at the Library of Congress of the United States. He pioneered the modern library movement in China and published several bibliographies on China-related topics. The collection contains correspondence, notes, invoices, manuscripts and typescripts, newspaper clippings, calligraphies, and maps dating between 1940 and 1964, with the bulk of the material dating after 1949 when Yuan moved to the United States. Materials in this collection are in Chinese and English as well as several other languages. The papers primarily document Yuan's research for his published bibliographies.

Information on Use

Access

The collection is open for research.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Yuan, T'ung-li (Yuan, Tongli). Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

Biographical Note

Yuan T'ung-li (Pinyin: Yuan Tongli, Traditional: 袁同力, Simplified: 袁同力), courtesy name Shouho (Pinyin: Shouhe, Traditional: 壽何, Simplified: 寿何), was a Chinese library administrator, bibliographer, and later consultant in Chinese literature at the United States Library of Congress. Born to a scholarly family in Beijing, Yuan graduated from Peking University in 1916. Upon graduation he became a librarian at Tsinghua College (today's Tsinghua University). In 1920, with a scholarship from Peking University, he enrolled at Columbia University in New York. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1922. In 1923 he graduated with a Bachelor of Library Science degree from New York State Library School in Albany.

Upon his return to China in 1924, Yuan became librarian of Kwangtun University (today's Sun Yat-sen University) in Guangzhou (Canton). In 1925 he was appointed librarian and professor of bibliography at Peking University. In 1926 he became librarian of the newly formed Peking Metropolitan Library, which in 1929 merged with the old National Library to form the National Library of Peiping (predecessor to the current National Library of China). Yuan was appointed associate director of the new library before succeeding its first director Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei (Cai Yuanpei) in 1942. During his tenure at the National Library of Peiping revolutionized library administration and services by introducing catalogue cards, establishing bibliographical journals and bulletins, editing and publishing bibliographies on books and libraries in China, and fostering international exchanges and cooperation. Through his work as librarian he also became acquainted with some of the most important thinkers in China of the time, including co-founder of the Communist Party of China Lee Ta-chao (Li Dazhao).

After the Japanese invasion and occupation of northern and eastern China in 1937, Yuan, having moved some of the rare books and manuscripts of the National Library of Peiping to the Library of Congress for safekeeping, left for southwestern China where many Chinese universities had also moved to form the Associated University at Kunming. Yuan provided library services at Kunming before setting up an office of the National Library of Peiping in Chongqing, China's wartime capital, in 1942. Through international campaigns and an extensive use of microfilms Yuan secured the access of Chinese students and scholars to books, academic journals, and the latest developments in research at the time of war.

After the Second World War, Yuan was involved as a representative of the Republic of China in various functions of the newly formed United Nations. In 1949 when the Communists took over and expelled the Republican Chinese government to Taiwan, Yuan moved to the United States. He became consultant in Chinese literature and later librarian at the Library of Congress where he served until his death in 1965.

In the United States Yuan published numerous bibliographies on China-related topics. His most important publications from this period are *China in Western Literature: A Continuation of Cordier's Bibliotheca Sinica* (1958) and several *Guides to Doctoral Dissertations by Chinese Students* detailing Chinese scholars and students overseas. Other major publications include editions of the unpublished works of Hu Shih (Hu Shi) after the latter's death, bibliographies on Sinkinag (Xinjiang, Chinese Turkestan) and Chinese art and archeology.

Yuan was a friend of Tsien Tseun-Hsuein (Qian Cunxun), Professor Emeritus in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations and Curator Emeritus of the East Asian Library of the University of Chicago.

Scope Note

The Yuan, T'ung-li (Yuan, Tongli) Papers contain correspondence, notes, invoices, manuscripts and typescripts of Yuan's published works, newspaper clippings, calligraphies, and maps, with the bulk of the material dating from between 1949 and 1964. The papers primarily document Yuan's research in the United States. The collection is organized into three series: Series I: Correspondence; Series II: Research; and Series III: Oversize.

Series I, Correspondence, contains outgoing, incoming, and third-party mail, arranged according to subject matter. Letters in this series do not directly relate to Yuan's bibliographical research but are of personal and logistical nature. They include Yuan's personal correspondence with friends and other researchers; exchanges with publishers and booksellers; invoices and purchasing letters of Yuan's publications from individuals, university libraries, and other institutions. They are mainly written in Chinese and English, as well as in French and German to a lesser extent.

Series II, Research, consists of material related to Yuan's published bibliographies and other research projects. Materials in this series are arranged according to subject matter, then chronologically. The series contains Yuan's research notes, which are mostly in Chinese, newspaper clippings, book catalogues, student rosters, and drafts of his published bibliographies. It also contains Yuan's research correspondence, including inquiries worldwide for books and archival materials and for information on Chinese students overseas. The bulk of these materials served Yuan's publications on China in western literature; Chinese scholars and students overseas; the unpublished writings of Hu Shih (Hu Shi); Sinkiang (Xinjiang, Chinese Turkestan); and Chinese mathematicians.

Series III, Oversize, contains two undated maps on Chinese Inner Mongolia and its borders with Mongolia and the Soviet Union. They presumably date before the Communist takeover of China in 1949.

Related Resources

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

Subject Headings

- Yuan, T'ung-li, 1895-1965
- Yuan, Tongli, 1895-1965
- Bibliographers--China.
- Bibliographical literature--China.
- Librarians--China.
- Library administration--China.
- China

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