

The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,
Union Theological Seminary, New York

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 6

Finding Aid for

Phonetic Promotion Committee Records, 1919 – 1930



Image Credit: Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Gregory Adam Scott, October 2009

Reviewed and Updated by Brigette C. Kamsler, February 2014 with financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation

Summary Information

Creator: Missionary Research Library
Title: Phonetic Promotion Committee Records
Inclusive dates: 1919-1930
Bulk dates: 1920-1928
Abstract: This Sub-committee of the China Continuation Committee worked to promote the use of the National Phonetic system (*zhuyin zimu* 注音字母) throughout China to improve biblical and general literacy. Collection includes committee publications, teaching materials, bulletins and posters that convey Biblical messages using Chinese and phonetic script.
Size: 4 manuscript boxes and 2 tube boxes, 4.50 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance: This collection was part of the then-independent Missionary Research Library prior to its closure in 1976, when its records were accessioned to the Burke Library. Portions of the present collection were copied from MRL Pamphlets in 2009.
- Access: Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkearchives@library.columbia.edu, or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible. [Burke Library staff](#) is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions: The originals in Series 2 are fragile and thus **RESTRICTED** to readers. The surrogate copies in Series 1 are unrestricted.
- Preferred Citation: Item description, MRL 6: Phonetic Promotion Committee Records, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

History

In 1912 the minister of Education Cai Yuanpei 蔡元配 organized a conference in Beijing to establish a national language (*guoyu* 國語). The conference selected a system of phonetic symbols, called *zhuyin zimu* 注音字母, to represent the standard pronunciations of the characters. This was necessary because while many Chinese characters have phonetic components and their historical pronunciation can be determined to some extent, numerous versions of the spoken language existed and continue to exist today.

In 1918 the China Continuation Committee (CCC) appointed a committee to address the problem of finding a simplified system of writing Chinese. At a conference in September 1918 the committee decided to support the use of the *zhuyin zimu* system. The CCC appointed a new committee, the Phonetic Promotion Committee, to promote the use of this system. Sidney George Peill served as its first chairperson, and Susan Jane Garland, an Australian missionary of the China Inland Mission, served as executive secretary for the first three years. Garland had been responsible for creating the first nationally-adopted system of Chinese Braille in 1913. The main aim of promoting the phonetic script was to enable all Chinese Christians to read the bible in their own language.

The projects undertaken by the committee included the preparation of teaching materials, researching teaching methods, working toward a standard system of spelling, preparing type and typographical arrangements for printing the symbols, publicizing the system and publishing the Christian scriptures in phonetic script. The committee published a full translation of the New Testament in phonetic characters and at least six books of the Old Testament. Funding for their operations came mostly from the Milton Stewart Evangelistic Fund. This fund had been established in 1917 and supported a number of conservative missionary projects, many of them in China.

In 1923 the committee had its first meeting with the National Christian Council of China, the

successor organization to the Continuation Committee. It was decided that the committee would continue its close relationship with the new council. At this time the committee was chaired by S. Peter Chuan, and its secretary was Rev. E.G. Tewksbury. Rev. C.Y. Cheng and Rev. E.C. Lobenstine had been involved with the committee as well.

The committee's name was translated into Chinese as *Jidujiao tichang zhuyin zimu weiyuanhui* 基督教提倡注音字母委員會.

Collection Scope and Content Note

This collection appears to have been assembled by MRL staff. Because of its physical state, in 2009 the entire collection was copied on to acid-free paper. Related documents from MRL Pamphlets were copied and the copies incorporated into the collection. Folders marked [MRLP] are photocopies of material originally from the MRL Pamphlets collection. Unless otherwise noted, the material can be found in folder 547 of that collection.

- **Series 1: Acid-free Surrogate Copies, 1919-1930 (2 boxes, 0.75 linear ft.)**
This series contains the accessible copies of archival documents and materials from the MRL Pamphlet collections. The newspaper issue reproduced in Series 1, Box 1, Folder 5 shares its Chinese name (*Guoyu ribao* 國語日報) with a well-known and widely-circulated periodical in Taiwan, but has no relation to that later publication. This newspaper, *China National News*, was published in Shanghai between 1920 and 1922, and was founded by Wáng Bóqiān 王博謙. An article related to the committee's history has been reproduced in Series 1, Box 2 Folder 7. This is additional reference material and did not form part of the original MRL archival collection.
- **Series 2: Originals [Restricted], 1919-1930 (2 boxes, 2 tube boxes, 3.75 linear ft.)**
Series 2 consists of the restricted original documents which formed part of the collection but cannot be handled because of their fragility. Digital images of all the restricted posters from boxes 3 and 4 OS may be found in Series 1, Box 2 folder 9.

Processing

Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed. Any items in an advanced state of deterioration were placed in Mylar envelopes. All items were photocopied on to acid-free paper.

In 2014, the collection and finding aid were updated as part of the Henry Luce Foundation grant.

Further Sources

The Burke Library contains other collections such as the China Continuation Committee Records that may be of interest to researchers. For more information, please see the Burke Archives website: <http://library.columbia.edu/locations/burke/archives.html>.

Contents list

Series 1: Acid-free Surrogate Copies, 1919-1930

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	1	Bulletin #3 January 1920, #5 January 1921, #6 April 1921, #7 July 1921; Reprint Publication #28 [19??], #30 [19??]; Order Form, 1920 – 1921
1	1	2	Bulletin #2 [1919?], #4 June 1920, #6 April 1921, #8 1922; Reprint Publication #24, January 1919 [MRLP]
1	1	3	<i>Daozi zhuyin keben</i> 道字注音課本 (Workbook of Pronouncing Phonetic Symbols), 1919
1	1	4	National Phonetic Symbol Chart, [19??]; Commercial Press Book List, 1920; Tract, [19??]; Committee Publication List, [19??]; Publication Announcement, 1921; Mandate of the Ministry of Education, Peking (<i>Jiaoyubu mingling</i> 教育部命令), January 1920
1	1	5	<i>Guoyu Ribao</i> 國語日報 (<i>China National News</i>), February 20 1920
1	1	6	<i>Zimu pinyin keben</i> 字母拼音課本 (Workbook of spelling with [phonetic] Letters), 1920
1	1	7	<i>Phonetic Picture Dictionary</i> , 1920; <i>The Chinese National Phonetic Script</i> , [192?] [MRLP]
1	1	8	Correspondence Extracts, January 1921; Pamphlet: “China’s Modern Goliath,” [19??] [MRLP 543]
1	1	9	<i>The Truth</i> , Vol. 1 No. 1, May 15, 1921; Poster: Phonetic Symbols, [19??]; Chart of Ministry of Education Mandated Books by the Commercial Press, [19??]
1	1	10	<i>Zimu pinyin keben</i> 字母拼音課本 (Workbook of spelling with [phonetic] Letters), 1921
1	1	11	<i>Christian Endeavor Topic Booklet in National Phonetic Script (Mianli hui timu chuji</i> 勉勵會題目初級), by Harry Price, 1921
1	1	12-13	<i>Zhuyin zimu zengkan</i> 注音字母增刊 (Phonetic Supplement), No. 2, No. 3, No. 6, No. 7, No. 8, No. 9, 1922 [MRLP]
1	1	14	<i>Yangcheng jianqiang jiaohui de mijue</i> 養成健強教會的秘訣 (A Secret Formula for Cultivating a Healthy and Strong Church), 1922; <i>The Chinese National Phonetic Script</i> , 1923 [MRLP]
1	1	15	<i>Zhuyin zimu baominyi</i> 注音字母報民益 (Phonetic Letters: Report on Benefiting the People) No. 11, No. 12, 1923 [MRLP]
1	1	16	Announcement, 1926; Order Form, [19??]; Pamphlet on Teaching National Phonetic System, [English and Chinese, 19??] [MRLP]
1	1	17	<i>Chinese Phonetic Writing Textbook (Zhuyin zimu xizi fa</i> 注音字母習字法), 1928
1	1	18	Tract, [19??]; Primer Foreword [Fragment], [19??]; <i>Guoyu youxi: Shou yu fa</i> 國語遊戲: 手語法 (<i>Dactylology</i>), 1928
1	2	1	<i>Memoranda regarding the Progress of the National Phonetic Movement</i> , July 1930 [MRLP]

Series 1: Acid-free Surrogate Copies (Cont'd)

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
1	2	2	<i>Shengjing xuandu</i> 聖經選讀 (Selected Readings from the Bible; Scripture Phonetic Reader), [19??]
1	2	3	<i>Songzhu shengshi</i> 頌主聖詩 (Psalms), [19??]
1	2	4	<i>Songzhu shengge zhailu</i> 頌主聖歌摘錄 (Selected Psalms), [19??]
1	2	5	Teaching Materials, [19??] [MRLP]
1	2	6	Instructions for Chinese Anagram Game (English and Chinese), [19??]
1	2	7	"Promotion of Phonetic Writing in China" by S.J. Garland, 1919
1	2	8	Poster Order Sheets, [19??]
1	2	9	CDR of Scanned Images and Metadata from Series 2, Tube Boxes 3-4

Series 2: [RESTRICTED] Originals, 1919-1930

2	1	1-10	Original of Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1; 3-6; 9-11; 17-18
2	1	11-15	Original of 1. 2. 2-4; 6; 8
2	2	1	Chinese Anagram Game Cards, [19??]
2	3 Tube		Posters The Bible (聖經) The Way of the Lord (主道) Purify [Your] Heart, Achieve Prosperity (清心得福) The Bible is Eternal (聖經永存) The Bible is Like Fresh Water (聖經比活水) The Bible is like Light (聖經如光) The Bible is Food for the Spirit (聖經為靈糧)
2	4 Tube		Posters The Bible is Eternal (聖經永存) The Bible is Like Fresh Water (聖經比活水) The Bible is Like Light (聖經如光) The Bible is Food for the Spirit (聖經為靈糧) The Bible is Like a Sword (聖經如劍) The Bible Brings Happy News (聖經報喜信) Pray to the Lord Always, Read the Bible Daily (時時求告上帝; 天天考查聖經) The Lord Sacrificed Himself for Us (主為我們捨了自己) All Those Who Call on the Name of the Lord Shall be Saved (凡求告主名; 的就必得救)