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Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 6

Finding Aid for

Phonetic Promotion Committee Records, 1919 - 1930



Image Credit: Burke Library Archives (Columbia University Libraries)
at Union Theological Seminary, NYC

Finding Aid prepared by: Gregory Adam Scott, October 2009

Summary Information

Creator: Missionary Research Library
Title: Phonetic Promotion Committee Records, 1919-1930
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 boxes, 2.25 linear feet + 1 OS tube box
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Phone: 212-851-5612
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Administrative Information

- Provenance: This collection was part of the 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 phone, fax or email archives@uts.columbia.edu, as far in advance as possible.
- Access Restrictions: The originals in Series 2 are fragile and therefore **RESTRICTED**. The surrogate copies in Series 1 are unrestricted and accessible.
- Preferred Citation: Item description, MRL 6: Phonetic Promotion Committee Records, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library Archives (Columbia University Libraries) at Union Theological Seminary, 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 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: Phonetic Promotion Committee Records, 1919-1930 Acid-free Surrogate Copies**
This series contains the accessible copies of archival documents and materials from the MRL Pamphlet collections.
- **Series 2 : Phonetic Promotion Committee Records, 1919-1930 Fragile Originals Restricted**
These are the restricted fragile original documents which formed the collection. Digital images of the posters in Box 3 OS can be found in Series 1, Box 2 folder 9.

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, but was not part of the original MRL collection.

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.

Contents list

Series 1: Phonetic Promotion Committee Records, 1919-1930 Acid-free Surrogate Copies

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</i> (<i>Mianli hui timu chuji</i> 勉勵會題目初級), by Harry Price, 1921
1	1	12	<i>Zhuyin zimu zengkan</i> 注音字母增刊 (Phonetic Supplement), No. 2, No. 3, No. 6, 1922 [MRLP]
1	1	13	<i>Zhuyin zimu zengkan</i> 注音字母增刊 (Phonetic Supplement), 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</i> (<i>Zhuyin zimu xizi fa</i> 注音字母習字法), 1928

Series 1: Phonetic Promotion Committee Records, 1919-1930 Acid-free Surrogate Copies (Cont'd)

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
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]
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 [This is Additional Reference Material Provided by Archive]
1	2	8	Poster Order Sheets, [19??]
1	2	9	CDR of Scanned Images of Poster from Series 2, Box 3 OS; includes Metadata for Images

Series 2 : Phonetic Promotion Committee Records, 1919-1930 Fragile Originals**[Restricted]**

2	1	1	Original of Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1
2	1	2	Original of 1. 1. 3
2	1	3	Original of 1. 1. 4
2	1	4	Original of 1. 1. 5
2	1	5	Original of 1. 1. 6
2	1	6	Original of 1. 1. 9
2	1	7	Original of 1. 1. 10
2	1	8	Original of 1. 1. 11
2	1	9	Original of 1. 1. 17
2	1	10	Original of 1. 1. 18
2	1	11	Original of 1. 2. 2
2	1	12	Original of 1. 2. 3
2	1	13	Original of 1. 2. 4
2	1	14	Original of 1. 2. 6
2	1	15	Original of 1. 2. 8
2	2	1	Chinese Anagram Game Cards, [19??]
2	3 OS Tube		[Fragile - Restricted] Posters