

NOTES AND NEWS

This new section in the *QUARTERLY* the editors hope will become a more or less regular feature. We plan to publish herein brief notes and comments as to developments in the field which are of general interest concerning research projects under way, the availability of new source materials, as well as information and materials of aid to teachers together with news items concerning personnel. The editors will welcome contributions for publication in this section.

As the items published in this section will be limited to news of only more general interest those wishing to follow developments in the field more in detail should consult *Notes on Far Eastern studies*, edited by Earl Swisher, University of Colorado, and published semi-annually by the American Council of Learned Societies, 1219 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C. (one dollar per year, postpaid).

The war has created an unprecedented demand for intensive courses on the major languages of the Far East. During this summer more than a score of such courses have been offered at a number of leading institutions. In the fall most of these courses will be continued and many more new ones for beginners will be offered. For information as to these courses write *The Intensive Language Program*, c/o American Council of Learned Societies, 1219 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C. In this connection consult an article by Mortimer Graves, "Oriental languages and the war effort," *Asia* (June, 1942).

The general interest in the Far East which the war in the Pacific has stimulated is reflected in the increased attention being paid to that part of the world by educators. To stimulate and guide high school curriculum-makers in adding new materials on the Far East the American Council on Education (Jackson Place, Washington, D.C.) has sponsored the organization of a Commission on Asiatic Studies in American Education. The Commission's program includes the organization of teacher institutes; assistance in the development of special projects in summer schools; and the publication of pamphlets for students and teachers supplementing materials already available. For further information and for their news bulletin write the American Council.

The Library of Congress has been granted permission by the Chinese Ambassador, Dr. Hu Shih, to microfilm nearly 3,000 rare Chinese items, sent some months ago to this country for safe-keeping during the war. These books, which are among the rarest treasures which the Chinese nation possesses, some of them dating from the eleventh century, are the property of the Peking National Library and will be returned to that institution when the war is ended.

Actual microfilming of the material is under way and will continue until all the books, except those of which the Library of Congress already has copies, have been so reproduced. In return for this privilege, the Library is making duplicate films for the Peking National Library to be used by scholars in China who, during the course of the long war, have had no access to these materials.

Included in the collection are works printed long before the time of Gutenberg,

ancient encyclopaedias, local histories, unpublished manuscripts, and the official chronicles of the Ming emperors for the period 1368–1644. The oldest printed book in the collection, a volume of poetry, was published before 1034 A.D., or more than 400 years before Gutenberg printed his famous Bible.

Now safe from possible destruction resulting from the invasion of Indo-China by the Japanese, one of the few copies in the world of a rare Buddhist manuscript, the only one of its kind known to be in this country, has been acquired by the Library of Congress. The acquisition of this manuscript by the Library is of particular significance because, although it is a document of fundamental importance for orthodox Buddhism, it never has been edited or published, and its preservation therefore might become of far-reaching consequence should other existing copies be destroyed.

The manuscript is about 250 years old, although the text itself is probably at least a thousand years older, being of the *Saratthadipani* by Sariputta, one of the earliest commentators on the Buddhist canon. The language of the manuscript is the old Pali of orthodox Buddhism as practiced in Ceylon, Siam and Burma, and it is written on 224 strips of palm leaves in the Cambodian script of Indo-China.

Used by the orthodox Buddhist monks of this region in connection with their ritual and preaching, the *Saratthadipani* is one of the earliest and most important explanatory commentaries on the *Vinayapitaka*, one of the three sections of the Buddhist canon, the so-called *Tripitaka* or "Three Baskets of Learning."

Scholars who may be interested in examining a printed *Index* in book form of 6,738 titles of Gest Chinese holdings may borrow the *Title index to the catalogue of the Gest oriental library*, compiled by I. V. Gillis and Pai Ping-chi, Peking, China, 1941, and they are advised to address Dr. Nancy Lee Swann, Curator, The Gest Oriental Library, The Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey, U.S.A.

Some explanatory material, together with samples, and lists of Chinese-English bibliographical terms being used in the cataloging in the Gest Library have been assembled on cards, and are sent along with the *Index* for inspection. Through a gift of the Rockefeller Foundation, it had been hoped to have on hand by this time enough copies of the *Index* to present them to certain libraries, institutions, and persons specializing in Far Eastern subjects, but on account of the war it will be necessary to wait some time for the copies to come out of Peking.

Florence Wheelock Ayscough MacNair

In the death of Mrs. MacNair, in Chicago on April 24, China and Chinese studies as well have lost an exceptionally sympathetic and talented interpreter of Chinese literature and art. For long she held a well-merited reputation in this country as well as in China and Europe as an outstanding writer, translator, and lecturer in these fields. Among her many publications the best known are *Fir-flower tablets* (1921) translated with Amy Lowell, *A Chinese mirror* (1925), *Tu Fu—Autobiography of a Chinese poet* (1929), *Travels of a Chinese poet* (1934), and *Chinese women yesterday and today* (1937). She was an active member of a number of societies including the Royal Asiatic Society of London and the American Friends of China (Chicago), being the president of the latter organization at the time of her death.