

# NEEDHAM RESEARCH INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

Newsletter No. 14

EAST ASIAN HISTORY OF SCIENCE TRUST

April 1994



## FELICITATIONS

The Director and staff of the Institute would like to express their warmest congratulations to Sir Joseph Hotung on his recent Knighthood, Dr David Li on the award of an honorary Doctorate of Law by the University of Cambridge and Professor W. Y. Liang on his appointment to the newly-founded Chair of Superconductivity at the University of Cambridge.

The Director would like to report that Dr Shigeru Jochi, Dr Togo Tsukahara and Dr Elisabeth Hsü have all received their doctorates.

## INTRODUCTION

We sent out the last issue of this newsletter a year ago. The interval between newsletters has, therefore, been longer than usual. This has not been because we have had nothing worth reporting but rather because the pace of activity and change has been so rapid that there has hardly been the time to pause and assemble a newsletter, given the limited resources of people power available to cope with all the tasks before us. We do however deeply value all the encouragement and support given to our Institute by its many friends around the world, and we feel the time has come to give our readers an account of what sort of place the Institute has become in its Founder's 94th year, what it is doing, and the direction in which it hopes to move in the future.

## THE NEEDHAM RESEARCH INSTITUTE TODAY AND TOMORROW

### THE FUNCTION OF THE INSTITUTE

The most basic of our resources is the Institute's magnificent



A text reading seminar at the Needham Research Institute

building set within the unique academic environment of Cambridge. The building mainly exists to house the Institute's library, an unparalleled and growing resource for an international community of scholars, combining a fine book collection with an environment highly favourable to research and writing. There is nothing like it elsewhere in the Western world nor is there likely to be in the foreseeable future. The library amply merits the special description given by John Moffett elsewhere in this newsletter. Other essential parts of our resources are the Librarian, his Assistant and the other staff who ensure that the Institute functions smoothly and make its resources available to scholars. We must mention too the financial support by way of Fellowships from generous donors which the Institute is beginning to be able to make available to young researchers from all over the world who wish to work at the NRI.

But all these resources and facilities would be much less effective without the outreach and initiatives which ensure that the Institute makes itself heard in the world of scholarship. At present the Institute's primary scholarly initiative is the *Science and Civilisation in China* project of which more is said below. None of our readers will need convincing of the importance and value of this work. But with the foundation of our new research monograph series, of which the

first volume will soon be appearing, we have begun a publication effort which will doubtless continue after *Science and Civilisation in China* has finally come to completion.

Apart from publications addressed to the world scholarly community, the Institute sets out actively to exploit and contribute to the vibrant intellectual life of Cambridge as a whole. Like several other important research institutions in Cambridge, we have so far maintained our independence from the University's formal administrative structures, but our practical links are growing ever closer. These links are expressed in a number of ways ranging from the direct involvement of senior academics in our administrative and decision-making structures to the frequent use made of our facilities by research students within the University.

In addition we have built up the practice of holding regular informal seminars at which visitors to the Institute as well as its own personnel have given accounts of their current research to lively audiences. During the present academic year, we have had particular success with a programme of text reading seminars, in which researchers have taken a Chinese text relating to their work and have expounded it in discussion with groups of young scholars who have invariably filled our rather spacious

tea-room to capacity. To see our Emeritus Director taking part in these meetings surrounded by so much youthful promise has been a striking experience.

Most essential of all of our functions are those through which the Institute gathers resources to sustain and expand its long-term scholarly role, as well as deliberating on the broad directions it will take. In Britain the Institute is the legal responsibility of the members of the East Asian History of Science Trust, presently chaired by Professor Geoffrey Lloyd, Master of Darwin College and a well-known scholar in the field of the history of ancient thought and science. The U.K Trust is supported by sister-organisations in Hong Kong and New York, chaired by two indefatigable friends of the NRI, Dr Philip Mao and Mr John Diebold, to whom readers of past issues of this newsletter will need no introduction. Scholars who value the Institute's facilities and active contributions to learning owe an uncountable debt to these nurturers of our endowment of "ancestral qi" to whom we look to guide and sustain the Institute in its journey towards the future.

## PEOPLE

### i) STAFF

The core functions of the Institute are supported by a small but dedicated team. In the first place there are the Librarian, Mr John Moffett and his part-time Assistant, Mrs Gao Chuan. The office is under the charge of our Secretary, Mrs Angela King who has part-time assistance from Mrs Winne Chen. In succession to Miss Corinne Richeux, Miss Tracey Sinclair joined us last autumn as personal assistant to Dr Needham. Mrs Kate Kornicki acts as part-time Secretary to the Trustees, Publications Board and Management Committees of the Institute. A welcome and highly significant addition to our team during the last year has been Mrs Ellen

Mackintosh, who joins us as part-time Bursar in control of our financial affairs. Mrs Mackintosh was Bursar of Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge, and her expertise has been invaluable to us in controlling our increasingly complex finances.

#### ii) RESEARCHERS

The facilities of the Institute would be as nothing without scholars to use them. A continual succession of academic visitors use the library for short periods as they pass through Cambridge, but the core of the Institute's academic life is its group of longer term visitors. Readers will be interested to hear details of those scholars who are here at the moment – listed here in no particular order.

Dr Togo Tsukahara has been here at the Institute on an Anglo-Japanese Daiwa Fellowship since October 1993. He has worked mainly on the development of science in 19th century Japan in the context of a wide range of other interests. His book *Affinity and Shinwa Ryoku: Introduction of Western Chemical Concepts in Early Nineteenth Century Japan* was published in 1993 by J. C. Gieben, Amsterdam. Dr Tsukahara was preceded in his tenure of an Anglo-Japanese Daiwa Fellowship by Dr Jochi Shigeru who gained his Ph.D. degree in 1993 after completing researches on the links between mathematical developments in Sung dynasty China and 17th century Japan.

Lowell Skar from the University of Pennsylvania is here pursuing Ph.D. researches with the support of the National Science Foundation of the U.S.A. His main interest is in links between Taoism and healing, and in his work he is able to profit from the Institute's good fortune in possessing a complete set of the Taoist Patrology, *Tao Tsang*, the generous gift of the Taiwanese Taoist Association of Tainan. Dr Elisabeth Hsü, another National Science Foundation scholar, divides her time equally between the NRI and Zürich. While in Cambridge she is working in collaboration with Professor Geoffrey Lloyd on the case histories recorded by a Chinese physician of the 2nd century B.C.

Dr Donald Wagner is working on the development of ferrous metallurgy in China in preparation for the "Iron and Steel" volume of *Science and Civilisation in China*. We are delighted to be able to report our recent success in securing a generous grant from the

Leverhulme Trust to support the completion of this part of the project by Dr Wagner over the next two and a half years. In recent weeks we are glad to have been able to welcome the arrival of Mr Mei Jianjun from the University of Science and Technology in Beijing, who will be spending a year at the NRI working on non-ferrous metallurgy in China with the support of a fellowship from the Li Foundation of New York. We naturally hope for the development of some helpful synergies here.

Mrs Liao Boqin of the Chengdu University of Science and Technology is with us for a year funded by the British Council Sino-British Friendship Scholarship Scheme. Her research interests lie mainly in the field of the science and technology of China's national minorities, although she has a broad interest in questions relating to the history of science and education generally. We are most grateful to those funding bodies who have enabled us to assemble such an interesting group of people in such a creative environment. Where else could this happen but at the NRI?

#### THE FUTURE

The Institute has now reached a stage where it is possible to plan confidently for a long-term future which will nurture and develop its special role as a centre of scholarship. The confidence with which we face the future is based on much more than mere optimism. Important parts of the future we plan for the Institute are already emerging into reality; the unanimity of our friends and supporters in regard to the goals which have yet to be achieved gives us assurance that we shall succeed in those respects likewise.

In the first place, we will continue to develop our rich and unique research facilities and actively promote their use by the international community of scholars. This means that we need to continue to gather funding to maintain our present high rate of acquisitions for the library and to continue to employ a professional librarian of adequate calibre. At present the Library still lacks the capital endowment required to give it a secure future. More than that, we also see the Institute of the future as actively gathering various types of funding for scholars who need to visit it, ranging from support for graduate students in the short and longer term, to

funding for post doctoral research workers who might work at the Institute on specific projects for periods of several years. We intend that outstanding work by such scholars should be published in our new research monograph series. Our full house of researchers this year is an encouraging anticipation of a promising future.

The Institute will also be an active promoter of international meetings of all kinds ranging from small workshops to full-scale conferences. We have already proved our ability to cope with the latter in the case of the highly-successful VIth International Conference on the History of Science in China which took place at the Institute in 1990. In organising such large gatherings we are lucky to be situated in the grounds of Robinson College which has excellent conference facilities of the most modern kind. The Institute itself is well-equipped for smaller gatherings: the South Wing holds the K. P. Tin Hall, (opened 1991) generous funding for which was provided by the K. P. Tin Foundation. Plans are already afoot to hold an international workshop on Chinese Medicine in commemoration of the life and work of Dr Needham's long-term friend and collaborator, Dr Lu Gwei-Djen. We hope to publish selected papers from this workshop as a commemorative volume.

A Needham Research Institute able to realise its full potential would require the full-time leadership of a senior scholar. At present, as readers will know, the Institute operates on a shoestring of personnel: our Director, Professor Ho Peng Yoke is only able to spend about half the year in Cambridge, due in part to the demands of his role as in fund-raising and promoting the Institute's international contacts. Dr Christopher Cullen acts as a Deputy Director and Chairman of the Publications Board in parallel with his full-time job as lecturer in the History of Chinese Science and Medicine at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. A full-time Director would not only be able to provide leadership within the Institute, but would also be able actively to exploit the Institute's growing links with the University of Cambridge, through the promotion of joint research as well as through undergraduate and post-graduate teaching. We are glad to be able to say that our sense of need in this area is shared by the University itself, and moves

towards fund-raising are now being undertaken on a joint basis.

Although we are fully confident that we shall see these plans become reality, we are also deeply conscious of our need for the continued help of our friends all over the world. Together we can ensure that the unique lifetime's work of an individual is turned into a permanent heritage for people from all cultures who seek to understand East Asia's contribution to the advancement of all human understanding.

## THE SCIENCE AND CIVILISATION IN CHINA PROJECT

On display in the Institute is a letter from Cambridge University Press to Joseph Needham dated 22nd May 1948, informing him that "the Syndics' reception of your proposal for a work on *Science and Civilisation in China* was entirely sympathetic". Readers of this newsletter will not need to be told what followed over the next four decades. The Syndics go on to express the view that "it is most desirable that the material should be included in one volume". But on the whole the world of scholarship will be grateful that this stipulation has been many times exceeded.

For most of its life the *Science and Civilisation in China* project has been created under the personal direction and authorship of Joseph Needham himself, assisted by many able collaborators. A new pattern began to emerge with the publication of Volume VI, part 2 on Agriculture as the sole work of Francesca Bray. Since then there have been several other examples of parts written solely by an independent scholar. Nevertheless Joseph Needham himself continued to handle all the day to day administration and correspondence relating to what was fast becoming a truly international project. As he has entered into his tenth decade, however, he has been content to leave such matters in the hands of the newly established Publications Board. This is a joint organ of the Needham Research Institute and Cambridge University Press, and deals with all contacts with actual and potential collaborators as well as settling general policy issues relating to the series and

speeding the parts of *Science and Civilisation in China* towards the Press. It is presently chaired by Dr Christopher Cullen in his role as Deputy Director. Fifteen separate fascicules of the series have so far appeared but there are still a good number to come. We will now try to give our readers some idea of what they can expect in the near future.

#### a) IN PRESS

Two fascicules are now moving through the publishing machinery of Cambridge University Press. The first of these is Volume V, part 6 on Military Technology, Missiles and Sieges by Joseph Needham in collaboration with Professor Robin Yates and other scholars. This is now at page-proof stage, and will be published in summer 1994. Another fascicule is at the preparatory stage of sub-editing by the Press. This is Volume VI, part 3, Biology and Biological Technology, Agro-Industries (Dr Christian Daniels) and Forestry (Dr Nicholas Menzies), which will appear in spring 1995.

#### b) IN PREPARATION

A number of other volumes are close enough to completion to be mentioned here. The nearest to submission to the Press is Professor Christoph Harbsmeier's contribution to Volume VII on Language, Logic and Science in China. As this note is being written, we await only the completion of the bibliographies. Within the Institute, Kenneth Robinson is actively engaged in the editing of this fascicule, as well as the concluding part of Volume VII, which will include section 50, 'General Conclusions' by Joseph Needham himself. By autumn this year, we hope to have the manuscript of Volume VI, part 7 which will contain material on the History of Chinese Medicine written by Joseph Needham and Lu Gwei-Djen. This will be edited by Professor Nathan Sivin, who has also agreed to contribute what will be a most valuable introductory essay on the present state of research in this field. Professor Peter Golas's manuscript on Mining is now at an advanced stage of preparation as are contributions on the Salt Industry by Dr Hans Ulrich Vogel and Horticulture and Botanical Technology by Dr Georges Métaillé. Work on other fascicules of the series is in various stages ranging from the moderately advanced to outline

planning. We will keep our readers in touch with developments as they occur. The new research monograph series mentioned above will be inaugurated by the publication of Dr Cullen's forthcoming book *Astronomy And Mathematics in Ancient China: The Zhou Bi Suan Jing*. This is a study and full translation of the Han dynasty work which stands as the first of the 'Ten Mathematical Classics'. At present Dr Cullen is preparing this in the form of camera-ready copy for Cambridge University Press.

## THE LIBRARY

As readers of the Newsletter will know, the Library consists of the extraordinary and unique collection assembled by Dr Needham and his collaborators in the decades of his work on the *Science and Civilisation in China* project. Consisting now of around 25,000 volumes, and housed in its spacious new accommodation at the Institute, it has metamorphosed from an essentially private collection for personal use to a major research resource to support an established research institute. In order to meet these changes and new demands, the main responsibility for preserving and enhancing the collection, and bringing it into the world of automated catalogues and information networks, has fallen on the Librarian. Having assumed that responsibility for some 16 months now, I thought it might be helpful to bring readers up to date on the state of the Library, changes taking place, and so forth.

### ACQUISITIONS

The Library has been very fortunate to receive a substantial three year grant for the purchase of Chinese language materials from the Chiang-Ching Kuo Foundation For International Scholarly Exchange, amounting to about £10,000 p.a. In addition, the Institute has signed an agreement with the Institute for the History of Natural Sciences in Beijing to the effect that we provide them with a set sum of money each year with which they buy books, serials and other research materials for us. All this means that the Library is now able to collect systematically, and in reasonable quantities, publications relevant to the SCC project. These include new publications from mainland China and Taiwan, as well as those which have been missed

over past years, though obtaining these is by no means certain. It has also allowed us to greatly increase our subscriptions to Chinese serials, and special attention has been paid to the acquisition of journals on traditional Chinese medicine and pharmacology. I hope in the future to be able to provide lists of our new acquisitions for those interested in particular subject areas.

The lack of resources for the purchase of Western and Japanese language books and journals has also been eased by the generous gift of U.S.\$10,000 by the New York Trustees to support these and other library costs. Systematic planning for the acquisition of these materials is still a problem, however, there being no long-term financial security due to the lack of a significant endowment to provide a regular annual income for the Library. The sheer cost of some publications, particularly those in Japanese, is also prohibitive, and the Library still relies to a certain degree on donations by scholars of their works, for which we are always most grateful.

### AUTOMATION

Thanks to contacts established by my predecessor, I have been able to embark on the automation of our bibliographic records. New books in Western languages are now catalogued (in full MARC format) "on-line" and stored in the **Cambridge University Library On-line Catalogue System**. This means that they can be found by accessing the Cambridge U.L. catalogue via networks such as JANET (Cambridge U.L. JANET call name is CAM.UL) and INTERNET (Cambridge U.L. address is IPGATE.CAM.AC.UK then type *UL* at the prompt), then searching catalogue 3 (**Union Catalogue of Departmental and College Libraries**). Our serials holdings can be found by searching catalogue 4 (**Cambridge Union List of Serials**). This means that our new records are available to scholars world-wide.

The situation with new Chinese books is slightly more complex. At present they are entered as "short records" (author/title/date and place of publication), and in romanised script (Wade-Giles, though with hyphens omitted). It is hoped that in the future these can be "matched up" with full records from China so as to allow subject searching, etc., and eventually that the searching and display of records will be possible in

Chinese script, though this is several years away. These short records are stored in the **Union Catalogue of Departmental and College Libraries**. At present, only a few hundred records of recently acquired Chinese books are on-line. These also do not include any of the several hundred new books on Chinese medicine, as the medicine section requires re-organisation. It would clearly be ideal to have all our existing Chinese (and indeed other language) holdings put on-line, but this cannot be done without special funding to provide for a full-time cataloguer to catalogue the whole collection retrospectively.

Chinese serials are listed in the **Union List of Serials**, the records also being in Wade-Giles romanisation.

In order to facilitate on-line searching, the Institute has recently had installed in the Library catalogue room (known as the "Engine Room") a computer link to the U.L. Catalogue. This allows our users not only to search the U.L. Catalogue, but also to use databases available through national and international networks such as JANET and INTERNET, and abstracting service databases such as BIDS.

It is hoped that we shall eventually be able to retrospectively catalogue the existing book collection on-line, so that the whole collection will be available for remote searching. In addition to this, I have in mind the establishment of a database for our off-prints. This large collection of largely pre-1980's off-prints and unpublished donated manuscripts accrued by Dr Needham over the years is of tremendous research value. Unfortunately, no subject index of its contents exists. Initially, I will only have time to put newly acquired off-prints on such a database, though it will be possible in the long run to retrospectively catalogue the existing off-print collection onto it as well. Though this would not be available on-line, it would enable visiting scholars to make rapid subject searches without having to plough through the relevant boxes in the off-prints room, and it would enable me to answer enquiries for articles on specific subject areas. Both these projects, however, will demand considerable planning and require fairly substantial funding.

To conclude, I should like to thank all those who have supported the Library in past years, whether through financial

donations, or by sending copies of their work to the Library. I cannot stress too much just how valuable these donations are to the Library, enriching the collection and keeping it up-to-date with the latest research. I do hope that you will continue to be so generous in the future. I should also like to thank my predecessors who maintained and enhanced the Library and laid the foundations for my work, and to all those working here at present who have made my first year so thoroughly enjoyable.

## DONATIONS

Over the past 18 months the Library has received three major donations of books:

Firstly, during 1993 the library was most fortunate to receive a major donation from The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation of Taiwan in the form of the entire Chinese Buddhist Canon or *Tripitika*. A Taiwanese reprint of the edition originally published in Japan between 1924 and 1934, it consists of a total of 3,053 works in 155 volumes, including 85 vols. of texts, and 12 vols. of illustrations. There are also 48 vols. of indexes. The Foundation also

provided two major dictionaries of Buddhism, and other related materials. The Institute is extremely grateful to the Foundation for this generous gift of such an important research tool, which greatly enhances the resources of the Library, and has already been put to use by one of our visiting researchers. The Institute would also like to thank Professor T. Barrett of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London for making the initial approach to the Foundation. A discussion of this important new resource by Professor Barrett will appear in the next Newsletter.

Secondly, at the start of this year, the Library also received the gift of 200 Korean books from the Daewoo Foundation of South Korea. This is the second instalment of a gift to be spread over five years until 1996. Once again the Institute would like to thank the Foundation for their generosity, and also Professor Song Sang-yong, President of the Korean History of Science Society, for his assistance in this matter.

Thirdly, over the past several years, Professor Peter Lisowski of the Department of Anatomy in Hobart, Australia, has donated to the Library his collection of

about 150 books on traditional Chinese medicine and paleoanthropology, as well as journals and a large quantity of off-prints. This collection is especially strong on the practice of acupuncture and Chinese medicine during the 1960's and 1970's, and so should be of great interest to the growing number of scholars working on the history and development of Chinese medicine and its modern application. Once again our thanks go to Professor Lisowski for his generosity.

I would also like to thank the following for their donation of books to the Library:

The Korea Foundation  
Mr S. T. Lee  
Mr Guan Chengxue  
Dr Hans Ulrich Vogel  
The East Asian Library, Univ. of Chicago

Dr David Green  
Dr Sato Taketoshi  
Mr Wang Guozhong  
Dr Togo Tsukuhara  
Dr Shigeru Jochi  
Dr M. J. T. Lewis  
Lady Clifford Darby  
Philip E. Zhang  
Professor Ikeda Tomohisa  
Professor Zhang Jiliang  
Professor Hashimoto Keizo  
Mr Chen Linsheng  
Mr Wang Dayou  
Mr You Xiuling  
Mr Rohan Gunaratne  
Mr Zhao Hongjun  
Professor Ma Boying  
Professor Wolfgang Michel  
Dr Donald Wagner  
Professor David Ingram  
Mr Chang Bide  
Taiwan National Library,  
Exchange Department  
Dr Fabrizio Pregadio  
Mr Lao Liang

John P. C. Moffett, Librarian

The Needham Research Institute would like to thank all those who have recently made gifts of money to the Institute. These include principally Mr M. Macioti of Belgium, and Mrs Louise Ansberry of the U.S.A.

We are also grateful for a generous annual donation from the Lee Foundation of Singapore made at the initiative of Mr Lee Seng-tee, Honorary Senior Fellow of the Needham Research Institute.

The Lu Gwei Djen Memorial Charitable Trust has also received a legacy of US\$15,000 from the estate of Irene Sharaff as a gift from Irene Sharaff and Mai-mai Sze with the expressed intention that it should be used to support the *Science and Civilisation in China* project.

## SCIENCE AND CIVILISATION IN CHINA

Published by Cambridge University Press

Published titles:

Volume I:	INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATIONS 1956 o 521 05780 X	£60.00 net
Volume II:	HISTORY OF SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT 1956 o 521 05800 7	£90.00 net
Volume III:	MATHEMATICS AND THE SCIENCES OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH 1959 o 521 05801 5	£120.00 net
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Part 3:	Civil Engineering and Nautics 1971 o 521 07060 0	£120.00 net
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Part 9:	Textile Technology: Spinning and Reeling 1986 o 521 32021 6	£80.00 net
Volume VI:	BIOLOGY AND BIOLOGICAL TECHNOLOGY	
Part 1:	Botany 1986 o 521 08731 7	£90.00 net
Part 2:	Agriculture 1988 o 521 25076 5	£90.00 net
In production:		
Volume V:	CHEMISTRY AND CHEMICAL TECHNOLOGY	
Part 6:	Missiles and Sieges	approx. £80.00 net

Volume VI: BIOLOGY AND BIOLOGICAL TECHNOLOGY

Part 3: 42a Agro-Industries  
42b Forestry approx. £85.00 net  
Further titles will appear as parts of Volumes V, VI, and VII. For details, see the discussion in this issue of the Newsletter.

## CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF CHINA

New

Volume 15: The People's Republic, Part 2: Revolutions within the Chinese Revolution, 1966-1982  
Edited by RODERICK MACFARQUHAR and JOHN K. FAIRBANK  
This new volume analyses the development of Mao's thought after the Communist seizure of power, attempting to understand why he launched the Cultural Revolution and to weigh revolutionary statements against opposing retrospective accounts.  
o 521 24337 8  
Publication March 1992  
£85.00 net

Published titles:

Volume 1: The Ch'in and Han Empires 221 BC-AD 220 Edited by DENIS TWITCHETT and MICHAEL LOEWE o 521 24327 0	£95.00 net
Volume 3: Sui and T'ang China 589-906, Part I Edited by DENIS TWITCHETT o 521 21446 7	£95.00 net
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