

OVERSEAS NEWS

Obituary for Lawrence H. Chen

The National Taiwan University Library expressed deep sadness on the passing of Mr Lawrence H. Chen, the University Librarian, on November 26, 1993, at the National Taiwan University Hospital, at the age of 59 due to illness.

Since taking office in 1981, Mr Chen had introduced significant improvements to the library services. He supervised the new library building project, implemented the library automation system, and formulated the future development of the library. For more than a decade, Mr Chen had been a driving force for the development of modern library and information science education services in Taiwan. His total dedication to the profession has been recognised and admired by all who have worked with him. He will be remembered for his long-lasting contribution.

Ms Amy Kuang-Mei Lin, the Acting Librarian, will lead the staff of the Library to accomplish Mr Chen's unfulfilled ambition.

National Clearinghouse for US-Japan Studies

This Clearinghouse is a database system funded by the Center for Global Partnership and the United States - Japan Foundation of New York. It provides timely and comprehensive information about educational resources on how to teach about Japan.

The Clearinghouse collects, analyses, abstracts, and creates a database of materials and resources that can assist school systems and individual teachers in developing and implementing curricular and lessons on broad areas of Japanese culture and society, and on US - Japan relationships.

For further information, contact the National Clearinghouse for US - Japan Studies, Indiana University, 2805 E. 10th St., Suite 120, Bloomington, IN, 47408-2698, USA.

New Asia Review seeks reviewers

New Asia Review is a quarterly journal being initiated by Greenwood Publishing Group with the premier issue due out in June, 1994. The journal will include feature articles and lengthy scholarly review essays. Most significantly, however, it aims to be a major source for reviews of current books, periodicals and multimedia materials on Asia. *New Asia Review* intends to serve as a guide to the best, most up-to-date and useful materials on Asia currently published.

The Editor of New Asia Review, James Borton, is seeking to identify reviewers interested in writing 250-word reviews on new books, periodicals and multimedia on Asian arts and culture, business and management, history, politics and cross-cultural issues, etc. The book reviews should be written for the well-informed general reader and submitted on 3.5" diskettes saved in MS Word for Macintosh or DOS along with two clean, double-spaced hard copies.

If you are interested, please contact James Borton with a brief statement of qualifications and let him know the title you would like to review. He will then contact the publisher and arrange for the book or other material to be sent to you, provided that someone else has not already been assigned to review it. Here is the information on how to contact him:

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Author of transliteration software solicits feedback from librarians

The author of Bamboo Helper, a DOS program that can transliterate Chinese language text to several romanised forms, is requesting that librarians who have used the software contact him with comments or suggestions. Bamboo Helper can be of significant assistance in efforts to add romanisation to computer records stored in Chinese text format. While such automated romanisation is very helpful, it does not eliminate entirely the need for human intervention. Chinese text romanised using Bamboo Helper must be double checked by a person with native fluency, because Chinese characters sometimes have more than one possible correct romanisation, even within the same romanisation system. For example, a character pronounced "hui" in one context will be pronounced "kuai" in another context. Fortunately, Bamboo Helper is context sensitive and does transliterate almost all text correctly. This facilitates the job of the human proofreader. Bamboo Helper also takes care of word segmentation (word division), another task normally conducted along with romanisation. By using an internal dictionary of Chinese phrases and names, Bamboo Helper can determine which Chinese words go together as phrases. The romanised output reflects this information, with segmented and romanised text appearing along with the original text.

Users of Bamboo Helper say "Excellent!," "Bamboo Helper is great!," and "This is the most innovative software I have seen in a long time..." However, author Carlos McEvelly says few comments, good or bad, have been received from East Asiatic librarians, even though they are one of the target user groups of the software. " It's gotten rave reviews from students and from teachers who use it to prepare teaching materials, but librarians have been pretty quiet."

Librarians who would like to offer their comments or suggestions, or would like to obtain information about the program, can send e-mail to Carlos McEvelly at:

mcevelly@netcom.com

or write to him at the following address:

232 Anita Pl., Santa Fe, NM 87501 USA