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Chinese Diaries collection15003454

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Summary Information

Repository:	C. V. Starr East Asian Library
Source:	Cohn, Don Jonathan
Title:	Chinese Diaries collection
ID:	15003454
Date [inclusive]:	1930s-1980s
Physical Description:	850 Volumes 10 cartons
Language of the Material:	Chinese , Chinese .

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Chinese Diaries collection; Box and Folder; C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University Library.

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Scope and Contents

The Chinese Diary Collection contains 850 volumes of hardbound and softbound diaries, dating from 1930s to 1980s. Some volumes are filled with writing from cover to cover; some, partially filled; and some, with brief inscriptions. It includes 81 volumes by different individuals of Republican Period (1912-1949) and 95 small volumes penned by an engineer, with scientific data and personal contents. The contents recorded in the dairies are significant, for instance, a set of 20 work diaries by a mid-rank public security cadre member during and after the Cultural Revolution offers detailed history of public security operations for two decades. A set of 10 work diaries by an officer working in a ministry of the State Council in the 1980s documented the political and daily lives before and after the Tiananmen Massacre in association with the students' pro-democracy movement.

Besides handwritten contents, many diary volumes contain printed texts, almanac-like information, pictures of the current leadership, a variety of scenic and art-historical illustrations, and other information to make them useful to their owners. There is a wide variety of cover designs, writing paper, and bindings, ranging from simple notebooks to high quality productions. In addition, there are 37 books of Republican Period and post-1949

instructing children and adults (workers, traders) the principles of composition, especially on how to write diaries.

The collection provides a vivid account and an invaluable source on Chinese politics, society, family and personal life from the perspectives of ordinary intellectuals and lower reach of the bureaucracy, from the eve of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937 to the Tiananmen Square Incident of 1989.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchase from Don Jonathan Cohn, Don Cohn Limited, 2019.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is located off-site. Collection is closed until processed.

Conditions Governing Use

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Accruals

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. Contact starr@library.columbia.edu for more information.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Diaries
- Inscriptions
- Laboratory notes
- China -- History -- Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976
- China -- History -- Tiananmen Square Incident, 1989
- China -- History -- 20th century
- China -- Social life and customs
- Labor -- China
- China -- Politics and government -- 20th century
- Cohn, Don Jonathan