

civilization will be deeply indebted both to K'o Shao-min, who wrote this great work, and to Hsü Shih-ch'ang, who published it in so beautiful a form.

Acting on a petition from the Ministry of Education, Hsü Shih-ch'ang while still President of China issued a proclamation ordering the *Hsin Yüan shih* to be placed among the official Chinese dynastic histories, in accordance with the precedents furnished by the new T'ang History and the new Five Dynasties History. This is the first official dynastic history to be issued for more than a century—the first, in fact, since the Ming History in 1742.

A Ming work of much interest is the *Huang Ming ta chêng chi* compiled by Chu-Kao-hsiang (*tzü Wên-ning*) in 36 books bound in 18 volumes in 2 cases. This work belongs to the class of history called by Chinese bibliographers *Pien nien*, or annals, and consists of a chronicle of events arranged year by year in chronological order. The preface, by Yeh Shang-kao, is undated, and there is no other evidence of the date of publication. The author took his *chin-shih*, the highest literary degree, in 1625, rose to be chancellor of the Wên Yüan Ko, or Imperial Library, and received the posthumous title "Wên Su" from the Emperor; his biography, along with that of other high officials, is given in the official Ming History. Annals of the Ming period.

This work records events beginning with the first year of the first Ming emperor, Hung Wu, 1368, and ending with the sixth year of the Emperor Lung Ch'ing, 1572. This work is mentioned in the Imperial Catalogue, but is given unfavorable notice, which may not, however, prove to be justified, since the Emperor Lung Ch'ing's commission, which compiled the Imperial Catalogue, was frequently very unsympathetic to works published late in the Ming dynasty, many of which criticized unsparingly the Manchu tribes then struggling for the mastery of China.

It is just such works as these, written by men who held high rank in the latter part of the Ming dynasty, that the impartial historians of the future will be able to utilize in writing the extremely interesting record of China's first large-scale contact with European civiliza-