



12-1-1993

A Decade of RLIN CJK

Karen Smith-Yoshimura

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal>

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Smith-Yoshimura, Karen (1993) "A Decade of RLIN CJK," *Journal of East Asian Libraries*: Vol. 1993: No. 101, Article 12.
Available at: <http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jeal/vol1993/iss101/12>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of East Asian Libraries by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu.

A DECADE OF RLIN CJK

Karen Smith-Yoshimura

Research Libraries Group, Inc.

September 12, 1993, marked a full decade of the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN) Chinese-Japanese-Korean (CJK) enhancements. When the Research Libraries Group, Inc., (RLG) introduced the CJK enhancements to RLIN ten years ago, catalogers of Chinese, Japanese, or Korean language materials for the first time could create cataloging records with CJK scripts that could be copied by other libraries and viewed by researchers across the country. Since the Library of Congress (LC), Columbia, Princeton, and Stanford created those first CJK records, the number of CJK records in the RLIN database has grown to 1,201,421 (as of June 30, 1993), representing the holdings of thirty-seven RLIN libraries as well as OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc. (OCLC) CJK libraries.

Increased Shared Cataloging

The benefits of sharing CJK cataloging are perhaps most dramatically demonstrated by the percentage of the total number of RLIN CJK records the Library of Congress creates (under the LI "DCLP" and NUC code "DCL-R") that are derived from other RLIN records. In 1986 the average LC copy rate was only 8 percent; in June 1993 the LC copy rate was 37 percent. In 1986 an average of 3,130 original RLIN CJK book records were entered each month, of which 54 percent were created by the Library of Congress. In 1993 the monthly average is 4,413 original RLIN CJK records, of which 29 percent are created by the Library of Congress and 71 percent by RLG members using the RLIN CJK enhancements. RLIN CJK libraries enter a total of 14,000 CJK records on-line each month.

Technological Advances Bring More Sharing

In automation, a decade represents several generations. The first RLIN CJK terminals were dedicated, custom-made terminals attached to a separate minicomputer or "cluster controller." By 1987 RLG had introduced a replacement, the MultiScript Workstation – actually a software program that could make an AT-class personal computer (PC) function as an RLIN CJK terminal. Total equipment costs were just one-third of the original equipment. Migrating to the PC environment has allowed periodic software upgrades to include new features – for example, addition of other nonroman scripts in 1987, 1989, and 1991 – at no additional cost to the user beyond the software subscription fee. RLG's newly developed Asynchronous Terminal (AsTer) software supports the display and input of CJK characters on appropriately configured terminals connected to SprintNet, rather than to a dedicated line. The next generation of software, currently in development, is to be Windows^c based, and will allow alternate input methods for CJK characters using a standard keyboard. It will also take advantage of the power of 486 platforms and Windows^c software features.

One of the major accomplishments in developing the RLIN CJK enhancements was the creation of a unified East Asian character set that included all the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean characters in the published East Asian national standards available in 1982. The idea of "Han unification" – encoding a Chinese character used in all three languages just once – was revolutionary in its time. The RLIN East Asian Character Code (EACC) set soon became the American national standard (ANSI Z39.64) and allowed libraries to share CJK bibliographic records between systems. The Library of Congress's MARC Distribution Services started distributing its RLIN CJK records in 1985 and, in 1989, started a "Contributed CJK Books" subscription containing the CJK records entered by non-LC libraries on both OCLC and RLIN (superseded in 1992 by a direct exchange of records between OCLC and RLG). A CONSER CJK distribution is expected soon. LC has been negotiating the distribution of JAPAN MARC records created by the National Diet Library; it has already converted the codes used in Japan to EACC so that, once the distribution begins, RLG can load the records into RLIN without further character conversion. RLG converted CHINA MARC records for the Chinese rare book holdings of the National Central Library in Taipei in the classics division in 1989. Vendors are beginning to develop local systems that support the EACC character set, which would allow libraries to retrieve RLIN CJK records as source copy and include them – with the CJK scripts – in their on-line public access catalogs (OPAC's).

The success in using a single character set for Chinese, Japanese, and Korean characters in bibliographic records provided RLG representatives to national and international standards committees with the evidence that the concept of "one Chinese character, one code" works. The new international universal character set standard for *all* scripts – just published in 1993 (ISO IS 10646) – contains the entire EACC repertoire of 15,850 characters, plus more than 9,000 other Chinese characters added to East Asian national character set standards since 1982. Computer and software companies that are members of The Unicode Consortium are already developing products using the new standard, which could mean that someday soon RLIN users could download CJK bibliographic records and use commercial software products to incorporate them into bibliographies or documents.

Always Integration

From the beginning, CJK and other nonroman scripts were introduced as *enhancements* to the current RLIN system. Thus the same terminal and software can be used for all RLIN functions. CJK records can be transferred into RLIN interlibrary loan requests, and NACO catalogers can create a name authority record for a heading established in the course of original cataloging (although only the romanized portions are included). Indeed, one of the major RLIN contributors to the Name Authorities File is the Library of Congress itself. All CJK records can be retrieved along with romanized-only records using the same RLIN indexes and access points. Indexes can also retrieve only CJK records containing either a specific form or all forms of a given character. Since all CJK records are integrated into the eight RLIN bibliographic files, even researchers on Eureka can retrieve the records, albeit in romanization only.

A Tool for Collaboration

RLIN CJK has also been the tool of collaborative projects among the East Asian collections represented in the RLG membership. In the East Asian Microfilming Project (1986-1988), seven participants entered RLIN CJK records for the over 4,000 volumes of Chinese periodicals, monographs, and newspapers filmed for the project. The RLG Chinese Rare Books Project, which has just received funding for its fourth phase (1993-1995) from the National Endowment for the Humanities, has already created RLIN CJK records for the Chinese rare book holdings of nine RLG members plus Peking University, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and Liaoning Provincial Library. The project has also developed cataloging guidelines to address the special characteristics of these materials, which were submitted to the American Library Association's Cataloging Committee on Description and Access for review this June. All records entered for the project can be retrieved by a FIN CP CHRB search in RLIN (from a local corporate name added-entry), although only the romanized portions of the records can be seen on non-CJK terminals.

As mentioned above, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has awarded RLG \$404,536 to support the fourth phase of its highly successful cooperative project to establish an international union catalog of Chinese rare books on RLIN. This brings to \$683,000 the total contributions NEH has made over the past five years to this RLG project.

"The project . . . is the most important bibliographic endeavour in the field of Chinese studies of the past two decades," wrote one of the anonymous NEH reviewers of the RLG proposal. "Although there are many collections of Chinese rare books in North American libraries, none on its own is really adequate for developing a sound primary-source base for in-depth research on most topics before the nineteenth century. Together, however, they constitute a comprehensive body of material. The value of the project is in unifying the disparate collections."

Thirteen Libraries Participate in Phase Four

The NEH funds will enable six North American libraries that participated in phase three of this project to continue cataloging their rare Chinese materials (three other North American libraries from phase three completed their cataloging), and will allow four North American libraries that were unable to participate in phase three to contribute cataloging records of their rare Chinese holdings.

The grant will also support the continued participation of Peking University and the Chinese Academy of Sciences, both located in Beijing, and the Liaoning Provincial Library in Shenyang. Other China-based libraries may contribute records of their rare materials to the project if funds permit.

"Apart from the obvious benefits to traditional research of having thousands of Chinese rare books and manuscripts properly cataloged and available on-line for the first time, this project is serving as a catalyst for new lines of inquiry," commented Sören Edgren, director of the project's central editorial office, which is located at Princeton University. "The attention to details of cataloging, authentication, and classification has stimulated the international interest of bibliographers, art historians, and other specialists who suddenly have automated access to publishing information and elements of physical description lacking in most other catalogs."

Staff Training and Central Editorial Office Are Key Components

Staff assigned to the project by the participating libraries attended training sessions before phase four began in the fall of 1993. All catalog records generated by the thirteen libraries are being submitted to the project's central editorial office, where they are coordinated, emended, and entered into RLIN according to guidelines and standards established in the project's earlier phases.

Project Goals and Expectations

By the end of phase four (1995), it is estimated that: (1) thirteen North American libraries with Chinese rare book holdings, including the two largest in Canada and four of the six largest in the U.S., will have contributed records of these holdings to RLIN, which represents about 60 percent of their total Chinese rare book collections; (2) the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Peking University, and Liaoning Provincial Library – three of the six largest rare book collections in China – will have contributed records for approximately 15 percent of their rare book holdings.

A significant byproduct will be the publication of the project's cataloging guidelines, a document that standardizes the descriptive cataloging of Chinese rare books and will be of particular value to libraries following North American library practices.

The Project's Earlier Phases

In the three previous phases of the project, records representing the Chinese rare book holdings of the National Central Library in Taipei were loaded into the RLIN database; five rare book specialists from Beijing created RLIN records for the Chinese rare book holdings at Columbia's C. V. Starr East Asian Library and Princeton's Gest Oriental Library and drafted cataloging guidelines; and an editorial office was established to centralize the identification and on-line cataloging of participants's holdings and to prepare project cataloging guidelines for external review by the American Library Association's Cataloging Committee on Description and Access.

For the Benefit of the Many

The first decade of RLIN CJK represents a culmination of shared expertise and resources, collaboration, and technological changes. Cooperation is the keystone of its success. When RLG wished to acknowledge the individual contributors to the 1,000,000th RLIN CJK record milestone reached last August, staff had to prepare 320 certificates. What we will never be able to quantify, however, are the thousands of other librarians and scholars who will benefit from these collective contributions.