Meetings and Conferences

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I. Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting

The 30th Annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies was held from March 31 to April 2 at the Palmer House, Chicago. Among the panels organized for the meeting, the following were of interest to East Asian librarians.

A. A panel on "Current Bibliographical Services in East Asia," organized and chaired by Tze-chung Li of the Rosary College Graduate School of Library Science, included papers on contemporary China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. In his paper on "Recent Bibliographic Sources on Mainland China," Ernst Wolff, librarian of the Far Eastern Library, University of Illinois, emphasized, on one hand, the paucity of current bibliographies emanating from the People's Republic of China, and on the other hand described in some detail the richness of western-language research guides for Chinese studies published since 1970.

Yukihisa Suzuki of the Graduate School of Library Studies, University of Hawaii, provided a thoroughgoing analysis of bibliographic services available in Japan, with special attention to the needs of Japan studies specialists. The speaker also pointed to the need for American librarians to establish closer relationships with the Japanese research library community, noting in particular that the close cooperation of the National Diet Library is a prerequisite for any major bibliographical project or activity.

Gertrude Soonja Koh of the Rosary College Graduate School of Library Science described "Bibliographic Services in Korea," citing the importance of the Central National Library, the National Assembly Library, and the Korean Publishers Association in providing current national bibliographies for governmental and trade publications. She also described the special services provided to the scientific community through such research and documentation centers as the Korean Institute of Science and Technology and the Korean Science and Technology Information Center, which were established to support scientific, technological, and industrial development in South Korea.


Kan Lai-bing, university librarian of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, in presenting the final formal paper, commenced her study of "Current Bibliographical Services in Hong Kong" by observing that the Crown Colony possesses neither a national library nor a national bibliographical center. Nevertheless, according to the speaker, a full array of services, such as national bibliography substitutes, periodical indexes and abstracts, government translation services, and information sources for industry, are available.
Serving as discussant for the panel presentations was Warren Tsuneishi of the Library of Congress.

B. "The Science and Present State of Information Management: The Case of China" was the subject of a panel chaired by Archie R. Crouch, director of the Daily Report: People's Republic of China, Index, who also presented the first paper, "The Scope of Current Information on China and Various Systems of Management." He characterized the existing data banks, guides, indexing, and abstracting services as inadequately organized to access systematically the 50,000 pages of information on China published annually in various books, periodicals, newspapers, and reports. He was followed by Frederic M. Kaplan of the Eurasia Press, who reviewed the available reference books and encyclopedias on China. Mr. Kaplan emphasized the need for a single, continually updated source book on China and discussed the problems inherent in the preparation of such a work.

In a paper on "The Discipline of Abstracting Articles and Monographs on China," Stephen Andors of Bard College outlined the criteria and the methodology that would be required for an abstracting service for publications on China. He considered a number of questions related to such a project, including the selection and scope of the materials to be covered and the method of indexing for users having a wide variety of research needs.

Arne J. de Keijzer, China consultant for American Business, discussed "The Organization and Processing of Chinese Economic Information for the American Business Community," stating that considerable economic and trade data on China does exist, in translations from Chinese news media, in trade journals, and in the newsletters and reports of government and business agencies, but that such information was widely scattered and not easy for businessmen to obtain. Noting a gap in communication between the American scholarly and business communities, he suggested seminars, conferences, and other means by which scholar specialists might provide intermediary and explanatory information on China tailored to the special needs of American businessmen.

Presented in absentia was a final paper by James P. Murray of the New York Times Information Bank on "Computerized Data Bases on China: Development, Extent, and Use." The author observed that because of high capital, developmental, and programming costs, it was unlikely that a data base specially dedicated to China would be established for some years to come, but that there were, nevertheless, several generalized commercial data bases, such as Dialog, Orbit, and the New York Times International Bank, containing huge amounts of data on China, that could be profitably utilized by members of the academic community.

C. A panel of "Sources and Methodological Problems in the Study of Post-1949 China" included a paper by Tao-tai Hsia of the Library of Congress on the sources and legal development in the People's Republic of China since the Cultural Revolution which is included in this issue. Chih-p'ing Chen of the University of California at Berkeley reviewed recently published reference works for the study of contemporary China, and P. K. Yu, of the ARL Center for Chinese Research Materials described the Center's project of microfilming Chinese local newspapers for the period from 1949 to 1970. The newspapers, which in their bound form would occupy some 72 feet of shelf space, have been drawn from the holdings of the Library of Congress, the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, and the Academy of Sciences of the U. S. S. R.
Microfilming has already begun, and Mr. Yu indicated that the project should be completed in 1979. Discussants on the panel were King-yuh Chang of the Institute of International Relations in Taipei, John Ma of the Sinologisch Instituut in Leiden, and Eugene Wu, Librarian of the Harvard-Yenching Library. Mr. Chang added to Mr. Chen's list of recently published reference works some publications of the Institute of International Relations. Mr. Ma made some general comments on the three papers. Mr. Wu discussed some recent reference works that neither Mr. Chen nor Mr. Chang had mentioned.

(from LC Information Bulletin)

II. Northwest Regional Seminar on China

At the spring meeting of the Northwest Regional Seminar on China held on April 15, 1978, one of the panel programs presented was the East Asia Library Resources Roundtable. This roundtable discussion was an informational meeting with reports by approximately 20 librarians, plus 10 faculty members and graduate students from Northwest regional universities, community colleges and public libraries. Among the topics discussed were the following: the grant from the Japan-U. S. Friendship Commission received by the University of Washington; national library cooperation and new trends in library operations; Northwest regional library cooperation, the sharing of resources, and mutual assistance; and reports from individual libraries concerning their collections, including area emphasis, problems, and needs.

(Yeen-mei Chang)

III. Seminar on Computer Support to Translation

A working seminar on Computer Support to Translation sponsored by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) was held on May 11-12 at the Ramada Inn, Rosslyn, Virginia. The conference, following an earlier seminar on Machine Translation in 1976, examined the problems of human translation, machine-aid and editing systems, machine dictionary files, and file management and word processing. More than 20 speakers addressed the gathering of about 150 persons, including managers, producers, and users of translations in both European and Oriental languages. An evening session was devoted to scheduled demonstrations of computer equipment including a Chinese character input device developed by the Chinese Language Project of Cambridge University and the London firm of Cable and Wireless, Inc.

(Robert Dunn)