Meetings and Conferences

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Center for Research Libraries: CRL Korean Specialists' Meeting

Using Funds provided by the Ford Foundation, The Center for Research Libraries sponsored a meeting of librarians dealing with Korean materials on June 10 and 11, 1982 at the Ramada-The O'Hare Inn in Des Plaines, Illinois. The meeting was intended to bring together specialists from those libraries in the United States that maintain significant collections of library materials related to Korea. In attendance were Eugene H. Chai, Columbia University Library, Dae W. Chang, The Library of Congress; Yoon-whan Choe, University of Washington Libraries; Yong Kyu Choo, University of California/Berkely, Sam-Suk Hahn, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Sungha Kim, Harvard-Yenching Library; Professor Edward W. Wagner, Harvard University; and Key P. Yang, The Library of Congress. Mr. Kim chaired the meeting and Professor Wagner served as a scholar/advisor. The Center for Research Libraries staff present were Ray Eoylan, Assistant Director, and Karla Petersen, Head of the Cataloging Department.

In calling the meeting, The Center for Research Libraries recognized that only six institutions in the United States currently maintain significant collections in support of Korean studies and that the representatives of these collections seldom have an opportunity to come together for an extended discussion of their mutual problems and concerns. The Center was particularly concerned to identify problems that might be met through cooperative efforts on a national basis.

The first day of the meeting was devoted to discussing problems relating to the acquisition of Korean research materials, while the evening of the first day and all of the second day focused on the application of the McCune romanization system and a review of AACR II rules in relation to the processing of Korean materials.

There was a general consensus that both the Library of Congress and Harvard have collections adequate to support broad in depth research related to Korea, and that the other institutions represented have collections adequate to meet local research needs. It was felt that U. S. libraries are purchasing the vast majority of the current publication output of Korea. However, it is clear that scholars and students not at one of the six institutions represented, must depend upon these major centers in order to do in depth research. Geographically the major centers are clustered in the East and the West, leaving few resources for the support of Korean studies in the rest of the country.

Major concerns expressed at the meeting included the following:

1. A better means must be found for identifying and acquiring university and non-commercial publications from Korea. At present it is difficult for even libraries in Korea to identify and acquire such publications. It was suggested that Korean librarians and scholars in the U. S. should try to find a means of working with their counterparts in Korea to solve this problem.
2. A union list of holdings of the major U.S. collections of Korean materials is needed. This is especially important since so few institutions are collecting material from Korea, while scholars interested in Korea are spread throughout the country. The first priority should be to develop a union list of periodical literature. A union catalog is being worked on at the Library of Congress and it was agreed that it is important for this to be completed as soon as possible. There are currently approximately a million cards on file and some of these need to be re-edited.

3. A coordinated effort is needed to identify, collect, and preserve newspapers and other publications published in the United States for Koreans living in this country. At present there is no systematic means for even learning what is being published. There was recognition by the group that the significance of these publications varies, some containing only news of interest to a local Korean community while others reflect the views of Korean Americans on events in Korea.

4. The need was expressed for closer and more frequent consultation between librarians dealing with Korean materials to determine who is acquiring the more infrequently used materials and to discuss other issues of interest. It was pointed out that this meeting was the first opportunity that Korean library specialists had had in several years for such discussions.

5. In light of the problem of identifying and acquiring Korean publications, there was agreement that it would be highly desirable to obtain funds to bring key librarians from Korea to this country for a conference at which these problems might be discussed. If sponsorship for such a conference could be obtained, it could have significant impact on the future development of Korean studies in the United States and would also be of benefit to librarians in Korea. It was felt that such a conference should bring approximately four Korean librarians to this country.

6. Most of the major Korean collections are faced with a shortage of space for storing materials. This space shortage is limiting the extent to which some of the institutions are collecting and retaining newspapers, even though they have adequate funding for purchasing these.

Other matters briefly discussed included the difficulty of obtaining North Korean publications in a systematic manner, the need for someone to collect reprinted publications from Korea, and the increasing need for business and economic publications by people outside the field of Korean studies.

(Ray Boylan)

Conference on International Cooperation in Chinese Bibliographical Automation

The conference on International Cooperation in Chinese Bibliographical Automation (CICCBA) was held on August 29 - September 1, 1982, in Canberra, Australia, jointly sponsored by the Australian National University Library, the National
Library of Australia and the University of Hong Kong. The 65 participants included 29 from outside of Australia. The foreign participants came from the cities of London, Singapore, Penang, Hong Kong, Beijing, Kyoto, Tokyo, Taipei, and Auckland. Five from the United States attended; they were from the Library of Congress (Barbara Roland), the Research Libraries Group (John Haeger), Transtech International (G. Y. Wang), the University of Indiana (Shizue Matsuda) and the University of Washington (Karl Lo).

The background and purpose of this Conference were succinctly stated by Professor P. H. Karmel, Vice-Chancellor, Australian National University, in his opening remarks, in which he said:

...Work [on bibliographical automation] has been proceeding independently in all of these [geographic] areas and there is already considerable diversity in the systems which have been developed so far. Some of these developments have been reported at earlier meetings such as those held in Stanford, California in 1979 and in Taipei, Taiwan, in 1981. In the latter part of 1981, my colleagues in the ANU Library decided that Australia may be able to make some contribution to progress in this field by providing an opportunity for specialists like yourselves from all areas where there is an active interest in these matters to come together and exchange information with the objective of encouraging the development of international standards. They then sought the cooperation of the National Library of Australia, and later the Australia/China Council and the University of Hong Kong; and with the support of these bodies were able to organize this gathering in Canberra, which we believe has attracted the most widely representative group of this kind so far.

The first day of the Conference was for registration and a reception. The second day was devoted mostly to Chinese character codes for information interchange. Participants from Beijing, Taipei, and Tokyo all reported on the development of different sets of codes in their regions. Dr. John W. Haeger of RLG reported on the RLIN's East Asian character code (REACC) which merges all the above mentioned character sets with another one used in South Korea to form a "data-base management-oriented approach to the East Asian character set standard problem."

The third day of the Conference was on Chinese bibliographical data processing and developments in Chinese MARC. Speakers from Beijing and Taipei reported significant progress in the development of Chinese language MARC and information systems. Australia and North America reported mostly on the processing of Chinese information in romanized form. With the implementation of the RLIN-CJK system, RLG libraries will, in 1983, have the first Chinese language system operating in a library network environment.

The fourth day was for the participants to look into the future. Mr. Howard Nelson of the British Library shared with the audience the experiences of the United Kingdom and Europe. He cautioned people not to be overly dependent on one or
two indispensable individuals. He pointed out that although UK libraries had embarked on Chinese language automation comparatively early, the project came to an early unsuccessful conclusion because the project was heavily dependent on a very few people's dedication and expertise. Once these people left the project, the project terminated. Ms. Barbara Roland of the Library of Congress, in her paper, praised the different parties who had developed character codes and MARC systems for having made conscientious efforts to conform to international standards, such as those of the ISO (Office of International Standards). She believes that complying with international standards will lead to further international cooperation. Other speakers of the day also expressed their wish to promote further cooperation in the future.

In accordance with the desires of a number of the participants, the Conference did not attempt to come up with any recommendations or resolutions at the end. The participants nevertheless individually expressed their gratitude to the hosts for bringing together so many people from so many regions of the world to exchange their experiences. It was then announced that in both Taipei and Beijing similar conferences on Chinese bibliographical automation will be held in March and September, 1983, respectively. Some of the subjects of concern in the Canberra Conference will be picked up again in those future meetings. When Dr. Lee Ngok, Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Hong Kong, delivered one of the concluding statements, he said that he had good reasons to believe that future cooperation will be "automatical." Ms. Enid Bishop, Chairperson of the Conference, concluded the conference with profound thanks to the participants for their professional contributions and congenial cooperation. She also announced that the proceedings of the Conference will be published. A landmark in international cooperation and in Chinese bibliographical automation came to an end on a sunny day in the City of Canberra, September 1, 1982. Since this was early spring in Australia, cherry blossoms were in bloom.

(Karl K. Lo)

European Association of Sinological Librarians

The Workshop for Librarians of Sinological Libraries in Europe, which met in Leiden from September 7 to 12, 1981, was reported in CEAL Bulletin no. 67 (February 1982), pp. 36-37. At that meeting a decision was reached to establish a permanent organization to be known as the European Association of Sinological Librarians. This group held its first meeting in Cambridge, England, July 3-4, 1982, with representatives from Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The meeting was attended also by Penny Herbert, who served as an Observer from Taiwan. The group established itself as an organization within the European Association of Chinese Studies (EACS), and asked the latter to make necessary additions to its charter. At the EACS meeting these proposals were discussed and generally accepted. The new Association, therefore, may be considered the European counterpart of CEAL.
Apart from these organizational matters, the following proposals were discussed at the Cambridge meeting. Mr. David Helliwell (Oxford) reported on a proposal for the compilation of a union list of ts'ung shu in European libraries. The EASL decided that this would be too complicated an undertaking at the present time, but urged that continuing consideration be given to it. Mr. Howard Nelson (British Library) made a proposal for a permanently maintained, computer-based European Union List of Chinese Serials. In his proposal Mr. Nelson pointed out the "Previous manual lists, prepared at great effort and expense, have been out of date before they were published. Automation, however, offers the possibility of continuous maintenance." He also pointed out a number of difficulties and problems, including the fact that it would require a guarantee of support for at least the first ten years, with the possibility of indefinite future support. He also raised the questions of how the information should be collected and where the undertaking should be based; and he proposed that the output of the project be issued at suitable intervals on microfiche. A small committee was appointed to consider and develop the proposal further.

Mr. John Ma (Leiden), who had organized the Workshop in 1981, presented a draft proposal for a Central Research Library for Chinese Studies in Europe, which would provide a central information service for all other European libraries. It was agreed that instead of setting up a new library it would be better to expand an existing one, and it was further agreed that Leiden would be the most likely candidate for this activity. This proposal will be developed further.

Library automation in Taiwan was the subject of a report by Penny Herbert. There was then discussion of possible catalog automation in European Sinological libraries. To quote from the minutes: "In view of the fact that the only project for Chinese library automation in Europe so far has been cancelled (the British Museum project) we agreed that the wisest course now was to wait and watch developments overseas. In any case, it is clear that progress will now have to be on a European and not a national scale..."

Mr. John Ma was elected Chairman of the Association for a two-year period, and Elisabeth Eide of the Royal University Library, Oslo, agreed to serve as secretary for one two-year period. It was decided that the next meeting of the Association will be held in Paris, probably July 4 to 8, 1983. There was also some discussion of the possibility of visiting China as a group.

(Summarized by E. G. B. from minutes prepared by Elisabeth Eide)

Preserving East Asian Library and Archival Resources. (A report on a panel presented on October 23, 1982, at the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Region of the Association for Asian Studies, held at the University of Pittsburgh, October 22-24).

Preserving East Asian library and archival resources was the topic chosen for discussion by a panel of East Asian librarians during this meeting. Mr. Frank J. Shulman of the University of Maryland served as chairman and Dr. Thomas C. Kuo of the University of Pittsburgh as the discussant. Several
faculty members who are frequent users of East Asian materials were quite active in raising questions.

The first presentation was Dr. Warren M. Tsuneishi's paper "Preservation of East Asian Language Materials at the Library of Congress," followed by Mr. Jack M. Jacoby's "A Profile of the Preservation Activities for Chinese Materials at the East Asian Library, Columbia University." The third paper was "Preservation of Japanese War Crimes Records in the U. S. National Archives," by Dr. John Mendelsohn. The last was Dr. Pingfeng Chi's "The Programs for Reproducing and Preserving Twentieth Century Chinese Publications at the Center for Research Materials in Washington, D.C."

Since all the papers were well-written, Mr. Shulman believed that they should be published in the forthcoming issues of professional and scholarly journals. He also suggested that the ideas and experiences mentioned might be assembled in a handbook or guide for the future use of East Asian librarians and archivists.

Before commenting on the presentations, Dr. Kuo emphasized two important aspects of today's preservation of East Asian materials. First, regarding the methods of preservation, he proposed a combination of traditional methods and modern technologies. He considered the following to be the more viable methods: (1) rebinding; (2) enclosure in new traditional containers; (3) full-size reprinting; (4) microfilming with computerized indexes, and (5) chemical treatment. Second, he stated that preserving East Asian materials is an urgent national enterprise. He recalled that the final report of the Joint Advisory Committee to the East Asian Library Program of the American Council of Learned Societies, which was issued last year, indicated that from ten to 15 million dollars are needed to finance the preservation of East Asian materials in North America. The report called for a systematic assessment of these endangered materials to be made by the Library of Congress, the Research Libraries Group and the Center for Chinese Research Materials, to identify (1) categories of materials which are now more fully held in this country than the country or countries of origin; and (2) categories which for whatever reason cannot and will not be preserved in East Asia. This proposal envisions launching a national project to save national treasures.

Dr. Kuo then briefly commented on each paper. He said that Dr. Tsuneishi's paper reveals for the first time what LC has done, what it is doing, and its future plans are for preserving East Asian materials. He was particularly pleased to know that in recent years LC has successfully treated with chemical some 5,000 volumes. He proposed that LC should (1) publicize its chemical treatment for the information of other East Asian collections; (2) engage in full-size reprinting for seriously deteriorated rare books which cannot be preserved by other means; (3) react positively to the suggestions of the Joint Advisory Committee.

Dr. Kuo considered Mr. Jacoby's paper important for the following reasons: (1) the East Asian Library at Columbia has numerous old but outstanding Chinese books, some of which were gifts from the Empress Dowager T'zu-hsi of the Ch'ing dynasty; (2) the storage of East Asian materials at Columbia had been poor for years; (3) it is the first among leading East Asian libraries to receive a sizeable grant for a preservation project. Most important of all, he believed that
Mr. Jacoby's factual report of the working process and difficulties will be enlightening to other East Asian librarians. The paper, however, did not indicate the criteria for determining the priorities for treatment. Thus Dr. Kuo thinks that some faculty members specialized in the field should be involved in such task.

Dr. Mendolsohn's presentation was brief but comprehensive coverage of a very significant subject—preserving the Japanese War Crimes Trials records in the U. S. National Archives.

Dr. Pingfeng Chi's paper was clear and concise. Dr. Kuo mentioned that the Center had rendered great service to the field of Chinese studies, particularly in assembling complete sets of serial materials.

He then concluded that all of the information presented in these papers would be extremely beneficial to East Asian librarians if it could be made available to them.

(Paul J. Ho)

[Editor's note: I expect to publish all of these papers in the next few issues of the CEAL Bulletin.]