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RETROSPECTIVE CONVERSION OF EAST ASIAN MATERIALS

Amy Ching-Fen Tsiang* University of California, Los Angeles

Automation of East Asian library materials was delayed at least ten years by the technological difficulty of handling bibliographic information in the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean (CJK) vernacular languages. This situation changed with the first vernacular record entered in the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN) on September 12, 1983; the automation of East Asian materials then became a reality. The production of the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) CJK 350 online system in 1986 had turned the technology to full account. However, the records in these two data bases represent only a small percentage of the total East Asian collections and are mostly for current publications, namely, post-1980 imprints. The vast number of bibliographic records for pre-1980 publications currently available only in local card catalogs are valuable and essential to support scholarly research. East Asian librarians became more and more aware of the need to covert these older records into machine-readable form to facilitate bibliographic control and access to older East Asian vernacular materials.

What follows is a preliminary report on an initial survey conducted in March 1990 of retrospective conversion (recon) projects and efforts in North American libraries. As the project manager of the UCLA Oriental Library's CJK recon project, I would also like to share with you some of our own experiences. I have to emphasize here that the survey was conducted hastily through telephone interviews with some colleagues at OCLC, Asian Shared Information & Access (ASIA), and other East Asian libraries and I would not expect my findings to be complete and thorough.

COMPLETED RECON PROJECTS

1. Saint John's University

OCLC was the vendor. The one-year recon project began August 15, 1988 and ended September 30, 1989. It was divided into two parts. Part A consisted of 3,009 titles in general humanities, history, social sciences, with a few titles in language, and no titles in literature. The majority of titles were in Chinese. Part B consisted of 4,251 titles of the Pai pu ts'ung shu chi ch'eng.

2. San Francisco State University

ASIA was the vendor. The recon project was completed in the fiscal year October 1988 to September 1989. It consisted of 4,100 titles in the humanities and social sciences, at a ratio of two to one. Literature represents a large percentage of the titles converted. The cataloging of an additional 1,000 titles of pre-1980 publications in similar subject areas might be considered part of the recon project if taken in the broader sense.

*This paper was delivered at the Southern California Technical Process Group Program, Alhambra, California, on March 28, 1990.
3. University of California at San Diego

San Diego has done in-house recon for 6,728 Chinese titles in the OCLC CJK format using a California State Library grant of $20,000 and $20,000 of UCSD Library funds. Part of the $40,000 was used to purchase a second OCLC CJK terminal. Approximately 50 percent of the titles converted were in literature, 30 percent in history, and the remaining 20 percent were in the humanities and social sciences.

4. California Statewide Data Base

This data base was created originally in RLIN before 1987, and in OCLC since 1987 by over one hundred public libraries, using a California State Library's Library Services Construction Act grant. ASIA was the vendor. The recon project was to enter into the OCLC data base 6,000 RLIN records of CJK and Vietnamese titles. The original RLIN tape had broken, so each record had to be entered according to the RLIN tape printout. The titles converted were in subjects popular in public libraries. This project was also completed in the fiscal year of October 1988 to September 1989 as was item 2 above.

IN-PROGRESS RECON PROJECTS

1. University of California at Los Angeles

OCLC is the vendor. In early May 1989 the University of California at Los Angeles and OCLC signed a four-year CJK recon contract, beginning July 1, 1989 and ending June 30, 1993, to convert approximately 65,000 CJK monographic titles. Among them were some 25,000 titles that had been cataloged between 1948 and 1971 using the Harvard-Yenching (HY) classification scheme and 40,000 titles that were cataloged between 1972 and June 1987 using the Library of Congress (LC) classification schedules. The titles to be converted cover all disciplines, with an emphasis on language and literature, history, the social sciences, the fine arts, philosophy and religion, and generalia and bibliography. About 50 percent of the titles are in Chinese, 45 percent in Japanese, and 5 percent in Korean. We send xeroxed copies of the shelflist cards to OCLC for conversion. We have completed all the xeroxing and editing work. According to OCLC's statistical report of February 23, 1990, a total of 5,744 titles have been converted. These titles represent all of the Chinese classics, all of the Chinese and Japanese philosophy collections, and part of the social sciences in the HY class schedules as well as all the fine arts in both the HY and LC class schedules.

2. University of Washington at Seattle

OCLC will be the vendor. In late February 1990 Washington signed a CJK recon contract begun April 1, 1990 to convert approximately 25,000 CJK titles in the subject areas of East Asian history (LC DS) and social sciences (LC H). About 50 percent of the titles are in Chinese, 40 percent in Japanese, and 10 percent in Korean.

3. Arizona State University

ASIA will be the vendor. ASIA has already received the specifications from Arizona. A CJK recon contract to convert approximately 16,700 titles will be signed soon. The whole collection of language and literature will be converted. Other disciplines include large series sets, history, philosophy, political science, Buddhism (especially Japanese Buddhism), and fine arts. Arizona will send to ASIA shelflist cards that follow the
practice of the parent library. Also Arizona did in-house recon in RLIN CJK for about fifty unusual titles, the specifications for which are too complicated to describe here.

4. Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions

The Institute has used state funds to do in-house recon for less than one hundred CJK titles using the OCLC CJK data base. There are 3,000 CJK titles to be converted. The Institute is exploring ways to get funds to hire more staff to do the recon work.

5. Indiana University

Indiana is analyzing and inputting into the OCLC CJK data base a Japanese set, *Ebara Bunko*, located in its special collection. This title contains over 3,000 distinctive titles in 207 microfilm reels. The analytical records in the data base will greatly improve scholarly access to the research materials of this important period of Japanese literature. Even though this is not a regular recon project, it is included here because of the great number of titles being made accessible through it.

6. University of Virginia

Virginia is planning an in-house recon using the OCLC CJK system for 16,000 CJK titles in the subject areas of East Asian history (LC DS), East Asian literature (LC PL), religion (LC B, and mostly in the Japanese language), social sciences (LC H), and fine arts (LC N, a very few). Approximately two-thirds of the titles are in Chinese, one-third in Japanese, and several hundred titles are in Korean. The staff at Virginia hope to start soon.

RETROSPECTIVE CONVERSION EFFORTS

1. Cooperative Recon Project Proposed by the Research Libraries Group

The Research Libraries Group (RLG) requested $271,211 from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to support a two-year retrospective conversion of ten important collections of East Asian materials in the RLIN CJK data base. This project will make available 91,294 bibliographic records for pre-1980 East Asian vernacular materials important to research in the humanities, particularly in the subject areas of history and literature. If funded, this project would begin September 1, 1990 and end August 31, 1992. The ten project participants will be Columbia University, the Hoover Institution, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of California at Santa Barbara, the University of Chicago, the University of Hawaii at Manoa, the University of Minnesota, the University of Southern California, the University of Toronto, and Yale University. The majority of the titles in the collections to be converted by each participant will be unique to the RLIN CJK data base. There are three basic recon approaches the participants intend to follow: Columbia, Hoover, Berkeley, Chicago, Minnesota, and Yale will do in-house recon; Santa Barbara and USC will sign a contract with ASIA as the vendor to do their recon; and Toronto and Hawaii will be updating and upgrading their romanized records in RLIN.

(1) Columbia University

Columbia proposed the converting of 800 titles of Chinese materials which were published in the late Ch'ing and early Republican periods and are in the subject areas of Chinese history and of philosophy and religion. Also proposed were 800 titles of
Japanese materials which were published before 1970 in Japan and are in the subject areas of Japanese literature, Shinto, Buddhism, and "oriental thought".

(2) Hoover Institution

Hoover will convert 1,000 titles of Chinese Communist Party materials published between the 1920s and the 1960s, as well as 800 titles of Japanese materials on Japanese political parties and labor problems published between the 1930s and 1970s.

(3) UC Berkeley

Berkeley will convert 1,000 titles of Korean materials on contemporary Korean history which were published from 1945 to the early 1970s. The titles proposed represent its entire holdings in this subject area.

(4) UC Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara proposes to convert 6,480 Chinese language and literature titles and 1,900 Japanese language and literature titles which were published between 1950 and 1979.

(5) University of Chicago

Chicago will convert 5,200 titles of its collection of twentieth-century Chinese literature. Approximately 1,200 titles were published before 1950 and 4,000 titles between 1950 and 1980.

(6) University of Hawaii at Manoa

Hawaii will add vernacular data to 15,000 retrospective cataloging records in romanized form covering the ethnography, history, and provincial history of China, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea. The proposed titles were published between 1931 and 1980.

(7) University of Minnesota

Minnesota proposes to convert 2,289 Japanese language and literature titles and 3,800 titles of its collection on Chinese history and art. Among them, 4,952 titles were published between the 1950s and the 1970s, and 1,137 titles were either published before 1950 or are without an imprint date.

(8) University of Southern California

USC will convert the full range of pre-1980 Korean monographic imprints in its collection. It consists of approximately 1,000 Korean titles in the subject areas of twentieth-century history, politics, economics, language, and literature.

(9) University of Toronto

Toronto is the only East Asian collection in North America to have its entire collection in machine-readable form. For this current project, Toronto will upgrade and add vernacular data to 30,000 records in the subject areas of Chinese classics, language, and literature as well as records of the Japanese language and modern Japanese literature. Approximately 25 percent of the titles are pre-1960 imprints and 75 percent were published between 1960 and 1981.
Yale will convert 5,300 titles of Chinese literature (individual authors and works) which were published between 1912 and 1979, as well as 1,625 titles of nineteenth-century Japanese history (from the Perry expedition (1853-54) through the Meiji period (1868-1912)) which were published between the 1850s and 1979. Yale also proposes to convert 1,800 titles of the remainder of its twentieth-century Japanese history (from the Taishō period (1912-1926) through the Shōwa period (1926-1989)) which were published between 1912 and 1979.

2. University of California Systemwide Survey of CJK Materials Remaining to be Converted

In 1988 the Library Council Task Force on UC Retrospective Conversion conducted a survey of the UC campuses to determine the amount of the materials remaining to be converted. In 1989 the Bibliographic Process Advisory Committee updated that information for CJK materials with the hope that funds might be acquired to convert this discrete portion of the University of California collections. All nine campuses responded to the survey. A total of 357,073 monographic titles and 5,274 serial titles are yet to be converted. The total estimated cost for conversion was around $4.5 million, taking $12.33 per monographic title and $18.05 per serials title as the unit costs.

EXPERIENCE IN CJK RECON AT THE UCLA ORIENTAL LIBRARY

The Oriental Library's CJK recon project is part of the UCLA recon project. Because of the language specialities needed, separate specifications were prepared and a separate contract was signed with OCLC. Although the CJK recon project was to start July 1, 1989, the recruitment of student assistants began in late December 1988. We hired one assistant for ten hours a week to xerox shelflist cards and two assistants for fifteen hours a week to edit the bibliographic information on these cards. After consulting with the coordinator for the UCLA Library recon project, I set up guidelines and wrote manuals for xeroxing and editing. I also designed forms for reporting statistics. We have bundled the xeroxed copies by subjects, namely, LC classification numbers. We try to tie in the CJK recon with the Title IIC Project for Japanese fine arts. We sent fine arts materials in our first shipment to OCLC. We also coordinate with our parent library to set priorities for sending records for conversion. Furthermore, we try to use this opportunity to tackle a few other things.

When editing, serials titles are identified and xeroxed; incomplete volumes are identified; analytical status of big series sets are also recorded. The extra work we do now will greatly save staff time and effort in the future. The CJK recon project has progressed very smoothly.

I only have one trying experience to share with you and one suggestion to make. It is important to make sure how the local online system works before the recon project starts. UCLA's online system, ORION, has record loader programs that will pick up a certain bibliographic record only one time at the first occurrence on the OCLC weekly MARC tape to the library. If the same record is sent again in a different MARC tape, ORION's program will reject it as duplicate. Without knowing that this feature of ORION was in operation, during three consecutive weeks 64, 49, and 33 records were re-updated by the OCLC staff to improve the record quality and sent again to UCLA in MARC tapes. Those records were rejected. Consequently, I had to delete all these previously loaded records from the ORION data base, and OCLC had to re-update
them. In order to avoid such rejection by ORION, OCLC operators have been instructed to do "re-updates" in the same week. If a "re-update" is to be done in a different week, OCLC must report the OCLC control number to me so that I will delete the previously loaded record before the re-updated record is loaded into ORION.

POTENTIAL RECON APPROACH--"BATCH RECON"

OCLC and ASIA are the two vendors which offer vernacular recon services to East Asian libraries. So far, all recon has been done online. RLG recently introduced an offline "Batch Recon" software program that allows libraries to create search records on a personal computer and upload those records to RLG for comparison with the RLIN database. Records are automatically derived when a match is found. No CJK workstation is required and no staff time is wasted on waiting for the system to respond. It is certainly very cost-effective and user-friendly. ASIA has tested this software on some of Arizona's recon records and found it very satisfactory. Approximately 70 percent of the records tested matched RLIN records. If OCLC would also offer its "Microcon" and "Tapecon" services to vernacular recon, I am sure the offline "Batch Recon" would open a new approach for CJK recon efforts.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that retrospective conversion is the wave of the future for East Asian collections. All recon activities should be widely publicized to let other libraries know what has been done and what is to be done so that duplicate efforts can be avoided. It is also useful to share experiences so that the same mistakes will not be made, good methods can be learned, and good ideas can be borrowed.

As I mentioned earlier, my initial survey was conducted hastily. There must be some recon activities, especially of the in-house variety, which remain unknown to interested parties in our field. In order to achieve better coordination, a thorough survey is necessary. In my opinion, the Committee on East Asian Libraries of the Association for Asian Studies, as a national library organization, should take the lead in coordinating the recon information and making it available to all East Asian libraries in North America.