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CEAL AT THE DAWN OF THE 21ST CENTURY:
COMMENT FROM THE CEAL COMMITTEE ON JAPANESE MATERIALS*

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Mr. Wu’s keynote speech reviewing the groundbreaking events in the history of East Asian studies librarianship as practiced in North America, supplemented by his remarks on the basics that we should bear in mind toward the next millennium, was certainly denotative of the nature of this organization, the Council on East Asian Libraries, in that the theme of cooperative measures among East Asian studies collections across the continent was repeatedly stressed. The development of cataloging standards for East Asian materials with the view to facilitating sharing of catalog records, establishment of the Chinese Materials and Research Aids Service Center in Taipei, inception of the Center for Chinese Research Materials, launching of the North American Coordinating Council on Japanese Library Resources, foundation of the Korean Collections Consortium of North America, start of CJK vernacular MARC operations, and ground work laid by pioneers for those of us following them: all of these firmly corroborate the widely-accepted conviction that inter-institutional cooperation is indispensable to modern library functions in face of the exponential growth in quantity of recorded knowledge, constantly rising information material costs, and budgetary constraints in both library acquisitions and operations.

While some milestones that Mr. Wu mentioned were area-specific to Chinese, Japanese, or Korean studies collections, it goes without saying that his remarks were for the most part generally applicable. Nevertheless, within the short time allocated to us, the Committee on Japanese Materials wishes to examine, following the points mentioned by Mr. Wu, one issue that appears at this moment to be more directly affecting the Japanese studies library scene than Chinese or Korean studies library operations, although it can easily be argued that it may simply be a matter of time before similar situations would arise with Chinese and Korean studies library functions.

A topic that surfaced in various contexts in Mr. Wu’s presentation was standardization of East Asian studies collection practices and alignment with North American mainstream library operations. An obvious recent trend in catalog data exchange is loading of various foreign MARC and vendor records in North American bibliographic utility databases, among them catalog records from the Bibliothèque nationale de France and Casalini Libri. In line with this general trend in utilization of catalog data prepared in the non-AACR2R/LCRI environment, Japanese-imprint title bibliographic records completed in Japan through application of Japanese cataloging conventions have been loaded to RLIN and WorldCat. Although a study that OCLC undertook prior to actual production-mode loading of such records from Japan indicated Japanese studies bibliographers’ strong support of the project noting enormous utility of these records for their collection development and reference work,1 and that, for cataloging purposes,

availability of these Japan-originated records in RLIN and WorldCat saves much processing time, it should be noted that the integrity of bibliographic utility databases is in jeopardy, thus threatening Japanese studies information retrieval efficiency within the North American context. Among the various divergences between records based on Japanese standards and those based on North American ones, the following differences are of utmost concern from the point of view of cost-effective information service provision: word division; missing romanization/imbalanced pair fields; simplified versus traditional Chinese characters; name/series authority records; subject authority records; and classification schemes. The following is an example of word division/romanization inconsistencies.

Word Division/Romanization Inconsistency Example: Background
ID:NAFL8419500 ST:p EL:n STH:a MS:c UIP:a TD:19911221054557
RFE:a CSC: SRU:b SRT:n SRN:n TSS: TGA:? ROM:? MOD: LCT:
VST:d 01-02-92 Other Versions: earlier
040 DLC‡cDLC‡cDLC‡cDLC-R
100 10 Tseng, Hsien-chih.‡iShih pa shih l’ueh.‡iJapanese & Chinese
400 10 Tseng, Hsien-chih.‡iJ’ uhashiryaku
670 His J’uhashiryaku, 1927.

Word Division/Romanization Inconsistency Example: Search Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>title search as of 02/27/2000</th>
<th>RLIN/bks</th>
<th>WorldCat</th>
<th>NACSIS Webcat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>十八史略?</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>十八史略</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>十八史略</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shih pa shih lueh?</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shi ba shi lue?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ju(u)hashiryaku?</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ju(u)hachi shiryaku?</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ju(u)hashi ryaku?</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ju(u)hachishi ryaku?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other words, while, on one hand, bibliographic record loading from Japanese sources in North American utility databases follows the pattern of library operations for other imprints, most notably European publications, the current situation surrounding Japanese studies collections, on the other hand, seemingly induces divergence from the North American mainstream library functions, which govern the standards established for maintenance of the bibliographic utility databases on this continent, and upon which East Asian studies collection practices have historically converged.

This predicament should evidently be resolved so that the utility of union catalogs may be maximized. Some efforts need to be made to reduce differences between Japanese bibliographic
standards and North American ones and to devise ways to transform, at the time of data loading into North American bibliographic utility databases, Japan-originated catalog records into ones following North American cataloging conventions. Facing this situation, it is undoubtedly high time that CEAL and other relevant organizations launched into more cooperation on an international level among libraries in and outside Japan, and more generally, all East Asian countries for that matter. There is no reason at all why the recent work of cooperation toward standardization/harmonization of cataloging conventions for ensuring higher information processing and retrieval efficiency could not be extended beyond the British Library's contribution to NACO and SACO programs sponsored by LC² and name heading alignment between those established through application of RAK (Regeln für die alphabetische Katalogisierung) and AACR2R.³ More work needs to be done with problematic Japanese phrase word division so that consistency on a global scale may be achieved within bibliographic databases. Also of paramount significance is development of a name/subject heading switching mechanism between the Japanese authority/classification files and those of LC.

It is clear that cooperative measures, as pointed out by Mr. Wu, have been and also will continue to be vital in further development of East Asian studies library services.*

*The above comment was intended to follow Eugene Wu’s article "CEAL at the Dawn of the 21st Century" in the June 2000 issue of The Journal of East Asian Libraries (No. 121). The Editor sincerely regrets and apologizes for its omission.

² "Meeting with British Library Representative," LC Cataloging Newsline 6 (7) (June 1998)
(http://www.oclc.org/oclc/cataloging/reuse_project/reuse_final_report.htm)