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Asian Materials Cataloging Seminar

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ASIAN MATERIALS CATALOGING SEMINAR

An Asian Materials Cataloging Seminar held by the Library of Congress on March 30 and 31, 1998, was attended by some 135 technical services librarians from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Asia. Forty-four of the participants were staff from LC. The purpose of the seminar was twofold: (1) to promote participation in the Program for Cooperative Cataloging, the goal of which is to provide more dependable and timely cataloging in a cost-effective manner, and (2) to expand the contributions of high-quality, core-level cataloging records for materials in Asian languages or related to Asian studies.

Introductory remarks were made the first day by Beacher Wiggins, Director for Cataloging, John Byrum, chief of the Regional and Cooperative Cataloging Division (RCCD) whose staff sponsored the seminar, and Helen Poe, head of the Asian Division. Byrum remarked that LC classification, Dewey classification, and the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (AACR2) have broadened their scope to include not only North America and Western Europe, but also other parts of the world. He added that "nevertheless, many problems remain for further attention. Today's seminar will provide a unique opportunity to pursue discussion of at least a few of these problems."

The first day of the seminar consisted of a presentation made by Ann Della Porta, head of RCCD's Cooperative Cataloging Team (RCCD) on the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC). Della Porta described the benefits of participation in the PCC, including the opportunity for libraries to: produce more dependable, timely, and quality cataloging by using a shared standard and more cost-effective cataloging as a result of utilizing a greater availability of copy cataloging. Moreover, libraries which participate in the PCC have a strong, coherent voice in the review and development of cataloging standards and, even more importantly, have access to expert training from a pool drawn from peer institutions, including LC.

Seminar participants were also given an intense training session in the Name Authority Cooperative Program and the cataloging of Asian name authorities by Thomas Tsai and Carolyn Sturtevant, both catalogers in RCCD. Sturtevant and Tsai discussed basic tips for creating and revising name authority records with special emphasis placed on authority records associated with Asian materials. Sturtevant's training session centered on name authority headings for corporate bodies while Tsai covered creation of authority work for personal names.

The day's activities ended with a question and answer period during which general cataloging and shelflisting queries were addressed by LC staff. This was followed by a "Breakout Session" in which outside participants met with LC staff to review questions answered by LC catalogers that attendees submitted prior to the seminar. Participants who evaluated the seminar found the "Breakout Session" to be most beneficial for resolving cataloging problems and coming to a consensus on issues such as establishing authority headings and assigning subject headings and classification numbers.

On the next day, Lynn El-Hoshy, subject cataloging specialist, Cataloging Policy and Support Office, offered training in subject analysis and classification to seminar participants. El-Hoshy instructed participants in four key areas: (1) performing subject analysis of library materials, (2) assigning LC Subject Headings, (3) understanding the basic structure and

principles of LC's subject headings system, and (4) becoming familiar with the basic documentation that supports LC subject headings and classification.

Kio Kanda, senior cataloger on the Japanese I Team, RCCD, followed with a half-day course which gave a general introduction to subject cataloging of Asian religions, with a focus on Buddhist materials. Kanda brought the seminar to a close with a discussion on the problematic nature of descriptive cataloging of Buddhist sacred books.

(Angela Kinney)