Appendix

Committee on East Asian Libraries
APPENDIX

Reproduced below for your information is correspondence on automating nonroman scripts between Eugene W. Wu, Chairperson of CEAL, and Joseph H. Howard, Assistant Librarian for Processing Services, Library of Congress.

March 15, 1978-Wu to Howard

I am writing on behalf of CEAL in response to LC's open invitation for comments on problems of automating nonroman scripts in cataloging. First of all, I should like to say that CEAL lacks the prerequisite expertise in commenting intelligently on LC's proposal pilot project in automating South Asian materials. We do welcome, however, this opportunity to state CEAL's position with regard to the larger problem of automating Asian scripts, especially Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.

We are keenly aware of the technical and financial implications involved in inputting East Asian vernacular records into the data base of any bibliographical system as you quoted in the LC Information Bulletin from the report of the ACLS Steering Committee for a Study of the Problems of East Asian Libraries. We are in further agreement with the ACLS report that it will be of "critical importance" to East Asian libraries if LC would include Chinese, Japanese, and Korean vernaculars in its MARC data base, as "the alternative would probably be an ambiguous, degraded form of these automated records in the romanized vernacular only." The problem we face is simply this: East Asian cataloging records, unlike those for some of the South or Southeast Asian materials, if done entirely in romanization without the original scripts, would be unintelligible and thus unacceptable to both scholars and librarians. As long as Chinese, Japanese, and Korean publications continue to appear in the vernacular and not in the romanized form, libraries servicing such publications have an obligation to continue to make their cataloging records available to their users in ways that will be intelligible to them, particularly the inclusion of the original scripts.

Thus, if LC should decide to close its present card catalog during fiscal 1981 and include thereafter the cataloging records of all East Asian materials in its MARC data base in romanized form only, we would strongly urge that the Library of Congress continue to maintain its card catalog for East Asian publications and to distribute its printed cards in East Asian languages until and unless, as the ACLS report suggests, "suitable means are found for incorporating these vernacular scripts into the data base." Anything short of this dual arrangement would, in our opinion, be a step backwards in our delivery of service to the nation's scholarly community.

In view of this, we join the ACLS Steering Committee in urging the Library of Congress to secure funds for further research and development of bibliographical data in East Asian scripts. In this task, CEAL stands ready to cooperate fully with LC in pursuit of this common objective shared by all of us.

Thank you and with best wishes.
April 24, 1978—Howard to Wu

Please forgive this tardy reply to your letter of March 15. The pressure of many meetings and other administrative matters has prevented me from replying sooner.

We welcome CEAL's position statement on the problem of automating Asian scripts. We share your deep concern about the ambiguities that could arise if East Asian cataloging records appeared only in romanized form in the MARC data base. We will, therefore, ask for funds in fiscal 1979 to perform the research and development necessary to incorporate bibliographical records into the MARC data base in nonroman East Asian scripts. Needless to say, we will value your proffered assistance and support in the practical pursuit of this goal.

With best wishes and regards.

May 3, 1978—Wu to Howard

I very much appreciate your most positive response to my letter of March 15 regarding the problem of automating East Asian scripts. I am pleased to know that you share our deep concern in this matter, and that you will ask for funds in fiscal 1979 to perform the necessary research and development work. If there is anything in which CEAL can be of assistance, please let me know.

Thank you again, and with best wishes.