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Committee Activities

Authors
Hideo Kaneko, Karl Lo, Eugene Wu, Weiying Wan, Eiji Yutani, Richard C. Howard, and Thomas H. Lee
COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

I. Annual Report of the CEAL Chairperson.

Perhaps the most pressing issue CEAL has faced during the past year was on the question of pinyin romanization for Chinese. The Library of Congress (LC) announced in June its tentative decision to switch from the Wade-Giles system to pinyin for the romanization of Chinese in 1981 and solicited views of others who handle Chinese materials. In response, the CEAL Subcommittee on Technical Processing (STP) conducted a survey of preference for the two romanization systems among faculty members, librarians, and libraries, and the outcome of the survey, which indicated only about 33 per cent of the returns in favor of pinyin, was reported to LC (see the CEAL Bulletin no.59, pp.40-50).

A group of East Asian librarians met at the Harvard-Yenching Library on August 8, 1979 specifically to discuss the LC's tentative decision, and the meeting's point by point discussion of LC's arguments for the proposed switch to pinyin concluded that none of them as stated by LC was a compelling reason to make the switch. While discussion continued in the East Asian library community, there emerged a consensus of opinion which found no overwhelmingly compelling reasons to switch to pinyin at this time while seeing many problems in the adoption of the not-yet-standardized pinyin system. Furthermore, while LC regards January 1981 (when the implementation of the second edition of the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules begins) as the most opportune time to change the romanization system for Chinese, many libraries do not share this view, since they expect to continue using their existing catalogs well beyond 1981. However, the adoption of pinyin by LC in 1981 will most certainly force these East Asian libraries either to close their card catalogs, or to face the staggering prospect of changing the headings on all LC cards to the Wade-Giles romanization. Any new card catalogs thus created will also have to be closed when automated processing becomes available for East Asian materials (resulting in three catalogs - two card and one automated catalogs).

Consequently, CEAL sent a letter to LC on November 28, 1979 in which CEAL requested that LC investigate and implement whatever means are necessary to insure a future conversion to pinyin in its present automated system while LC defer its decision to adopt pinyin for its bibliographic products until such time as problems with standardization of pinyin application have been sufficiently resolved, and the card catalogs are ready to be replaced by MARC for East Asian scripts. Similarly, the Committee on Cataloging: Asian and African Materials of the American Library Association (ALA) voted 5 to 2 in favor of Wade-Giles on January 22, 1980 at the Midwinter Conference in Chicago.

On February 11, 1980, CEAL received a letter, dated February 4, 1980, from LC in which CEAL is invited to respond by March 15, 1980 to LC's questionnaire requesting an indication of preference for one of two alternatives: (1) the adoption of pinyin by LC for use in its cataloging after January 1, 1981; and (2) the continued use of Wade-Giles with the understanding that
"this will probably preclude a change to pinyin in the foreseeable future."
LC's covering letter argues that due to the prohibitive cost involved in adopting pinyin at a later date, it is practically a case of "now or never" in making the proposed switch in romanization. CEAL will draft an official response to LC after digesting reports from three subcommittees (on Automation, Chinese Materials, and Technical Processing) and other written comments now being solicited.

The pinyin question also raises an important issue of LC's consultation with the field. While LC has solicited institutional opinions on its tentative decision to adopt pinyin in its letter of July 5, 1979 to directors of re­search libraries, neither AAS nor CEAL received such an official letter of inquiry. CEAL's responses were solely based on a public announcement made by LC at the ALA Annual Conference in June of 1979 and on the notice in the LC Information Bulletin of June 29, 1979. LC's first official query to CEAL came in the above-mentioned letter of February 4, 1980 when LC sent out a second round of letters and questionnaires to library directors and those who responded to its June announcement. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that LC representatives reporting to the CEAL annual meeting of March 1979 made only passing reference to this important development, the consequences of which may well compel East Asian libraries throughout the country to close their card catalogs which, as a national bibliographic resource, collectively contain several millions of Chinese cards that for more than twenty years have been systematically romanized and filed according to the Wade-Giles system. LC's latest query is now asking CEAL to respond by March 15, four days before CEAL will hold its annual meeting in Washington, D.C. This is certainly a far cry from the days when the East Asian library community worked in close cooperation and coordination with LC through the Joint Committee of the Far Eastern Association (now AAS) and ALA on Oriental Collections (1949-1952), the Orientalia Processing Committee (organized by LC in 1953), the ALA Special Committee on Cataloging Oriental Materials (organized 1954), and the Committee on American Library Resources on the Far East of the Far Eastern Association (organized 1958 and renamed CEAL in 1967). Through these committees, East Asian librarians and LC staff jointly formulated and revised the cataloging rules that we still use today.

It is true that all libraries in the U.S. and Canada are increasingly interdependent at all levels and in a variety of specialized areas through networking and other forms of coordination. Furthermore, applicable but costly technologies in the field are developing rapidly in the face of ever tightening fiscal constraints at all institutions. Under these circumstances, institutional perspectives become essential, and no unit of a library can afford to make a decision that is not in the interests of its parent institution. However, we must ask whether the needs of our field will be fully met solely on the basis of vertical communication within individual institutions without the benefit of horizontal communication and consultation among the East Asian librarians at various institutions. We must reexamine the role of CEAL in this context and vigorously assert our rightful place in the library community as a whole. This also points to a need for the closer cooperation of East Asian librarians with general librarians, and with ALA, and wider horizontal coordination among East Asian librarians themselves. We in CEAL
should invite the participation of general librarians as well as faculty members in East Asian studies in our deliberative processes as deemed appropriate; some of our subcommittees, such as the subcommittee on Technical Processing, should probably be linked once again in cooperative ventures with appropriate committees of ALA; and at the same time more East Asian librarians should become active in ALA.

One of the most significant recent developments in the field is a proposal to develop the capability to include East Asian vernacular characters in the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN). On November 30, 1979, the Library of Congress (LC) and the Research Libraries Group (RLG) signed an agreement to seek means and methods to automate East Asian bibliographic records in the vernacular scripts. Under the agreement, LC and RLG will cooperate in developing the capability for handling East Asian characters in machine-readable form; RLG will select input and output hardware and software as may be necessary for library and bibliographic network applications; RLG will seek funding for the expenses involved from the foundation sector; when resources and facilities are available, LC will catalog East Asian vernacular titles on-line into the RLIN data base; and all the inputted records will be in the public domain and be made available to non-RLIN users. RLG has submitted the proposal to four foundations, and the East Asian library community now anxiously awaits its outcome.

This important project lays the cornerstone of national planning for East Asian libraries which is the culmination of years of effort by East Asian librarians and those who have been deeply concerned with the problems of East Asian libraries. The proposal originated in the ACLS/ARL/SSRC Joint Advisory Committee on the East Asian Library Program and its predecessor, the ACLS Steering Committee for a Study of the Problems of East Asian Libraries. The latter committee was organized at the insistence of CEAL and, needless to say, CEAL strongly supported the work of these two committees through its members who served on the committees and contributed working papers and drafts of proposals. Equally important was the participation in these committees of concerned and dedicated faculty members and administrators of prominent research libraries.

However, the future of the ACLS/ARL/SSRC Joint Advisory Committee and the East Asian Library Program is now in doubt, even as its work has just begun. We must see to it that a proper successor to this committee is constituted to continue this work. The next three years or so will be a crucial period for the East Asian Library community. It is our earnest and sincere hope that an automated bibliographic network with capability of processing East Asian characters will be created, and that its use in cataloging and the compilation of union catalogs will facilitate other phases of our work, such as coordinated collection development and shared access to resources.

Furthermore, because this spring will be the time when a package of East Asian library programs will be presented to a major foundation, it is crucial for CEAL to develop measures to strengthen itself. A prompt review of CEAL's needs to strengthen itself structurally and in terms of personnel is in order. At the 1980 annual meeting, CEAL will discuss these needs and draft a proposal to put itself on a better footing to serve the profession.
During the past year, a number of CEAL members have made successful trips to the People's Republic of China, and it is clear that we are on the threshold of a new era of the U.S.-China bi-national cooperation in library and East Asian Studies communities. As more and more librarians and scholars flock to China and use Chinese libraries, they will learn of specific rare and important items in these libraries, as well as the manner in which these institutions are managed and serviced; in the future, CEAL could be of great service to the community by functioning as the clearing house for the collection and dissemination of such information, and we should investigate the most effective means of performing this service.

CEAL has grown substantially larger since the days of CALRFE and of the earlier national committees on East Asian libraries. In fact, CEAL today is a veritable association of East Asian libraries and librarians, and it has no doubt outgrown some of its existing procedures, such as those for the nomination and election of its officers. For this reason, the Subcommittee on CEAL Procedures was appointed last year to investigate the desirability of revising the existing CEAL Procedures; this subcommittee has drafted a revision of the Procedures which will be submitted for discussion at our 1980 annual meeting. CEAL has also appointed a new Subcommittee on Library Access to investigate the present state and problems of access to East Asian libraries for scholars from other institutions. Its mission is, first, to document clearly current practices with regard to access provided by libraries and, second, to make recommendations for improvements in this all-important area of inter-institutional cooperation.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank those who have given their time and effort so unselfishly to CEAL and the profession during the past year. On behalf of CEAL, I also gratefully acknowledge the grants made by AAS and its Northeast Asia Council last year to partially defray the cost of publishing the CEAL Bulletin. Once again, I look forward to working with you in endeavouring to enhance our cause both from within and outside of CEAL.

(Hideo Kaneko)

II. Reports of CEAL Subcommittees.

Subcommittee on Automation

The Subcommittee has been enlarged by the addition of another member, Emiko Moffitt. The Subcommittee met very briefly during the last AAS meeting and decided to keep an active interest in informing CEAL members about new developments in automation.

In a conference sponsored by the East Asian Library Program of ACLS in November, 1979, at Stanford, three members of this Subcommittee—Moffitt, Tsuneishi, and Lo—were invited to participate in different capacities. Several other CEAL members also attended. Papers of the Conference on East
Asian Character Processing in Automated Bibliographic Systems are deposited with the Stanford University Library and the Harvard-Yenching Library. They have also been distributed to all participants, including participants from Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Great Britain.

In view of the increasingly informed membership in CEAL and the interest in the automation of East Asian libraries in various libraries and networks, the role of the Subcommittee to inform the membership on automation may need some modification. This will be a topic of discussion in the forthcoming AAS meetings.

(Karl Lo, Chairperson)

Subcommittee on CEAL Procedures

The Subcommittee on CEAL Procedures was appointed following the CEAL Annual Meeting in 1979 to investigate the possibility of revising the CEAL Procedures as adopted in 1967 and amended in 1976. The Subcommittee proceeded with its work with the following assumptions: (1) CEAL is not at this time seeking to become an independent association; (2) as a "committee" of the Association for Asian Studies, CEAL does not require a Constitution, but rather a set of simple and workable procedures with which CEAL can move forward in order to accomplish its objectives; (3) membership's concern with the procedures now in force lies in the nominating and election procedures; and (4) for purposes of general elections, CEAL must maintain an accurate membership list on a current basis, and this can best be accomplished with the institution of dues. If legally permissible for CEAL to charge dues (the AAS counsel is being consulted on this), those who pay dues would be entitled to vote at elections and to receive free of charge the CEAL Bulletin and the annual directory of East Asian libraries. The CEAL Bulletin would remain available for subscription by institutions and individuals who are not members of CEAL.

It is expected that there will be an ample opportunity for discussion on the draft of a revised version of the Procedures at the next CEAL Annual Meeting in Washington, D. C. in March, 1980.

(Eugene W. Wu, Chairperson)

Subcommittee on Chinese Materials

During the past year the activities of the Subcommittee on Chinese Materials were very limited. Individual members of the Subcommittee, however, were very active. Immediately following the last AAS meeting in Los Angeles, Chester Wang (Wisconsin) went to the PRC for a business trip, which took him to the libraries of the Nanking and Chung Shan Universities. C. P. Chen (Berkeley) visited China in early summer. His itinerary included Shanghai and Fuchien. In the fall, Antony Marr (Yale) led a group of librarians, many of whom were
members of CEAL, to visit China. Their itinerary included many libraries and book stores. The reports of the last-mentioned group are being edited for publication.

In view of the rapid recovery of the Chinese publishing industry and the development in Chinese libraries, an informal round table on "the Chinese book scene" is being planned to share information, compare notes, and discuss matters related to Chinese materials. The round table will be held during the annual meetings of the AAS.

(Weiyin Wan, Chairperson)

Subcommittee on Japanese Materials

In response to inquiries regarding the Subcommittee's activities, members have been requested to submit to the Chairperson their proposals for long- and short-term projects relating to Japanese collections in North America which would be appropriate for Subcommittee deliberation and action. As cooperative means of solving the common problems that were given definition at the first National Workshop in Washington, D. C.--financial constraints, difficulties in recruiting and training personnel, and the need for regional and national cooperation—the Chairperson has, for his part, submitted for discussion by the Subcommittee the following proposals:

(1) Sponsorship of a panel on Japanese libraries and book trade for the 1981 AAS annual meeting;
(2) Planning for a second National Workshop for Japanese collection librarians, with technical services and East Asian library automation as possible focuses of attention;
(3) Presentation of a petition, through CEAL or the AAS Board of Directors, to the governments of the U.S. and Japan to reduce shipping costs of Japanese materials;
(4) Support of projects to improve bibliographic control and access, such as the publication of book catalogs of additional major East Asian collections, and ongoing surveys of Japanese collections;
(5) Organization of a national group of librarians to continue the compilation of an annotated "Bibliography of Reference Works for Japanese Studies."

Upon receiving comments and evaluations of the above proposals, as well as other recommendations from Subcommittee members, the Chairperson will summarize them for purposes of preparing an agenda for the forthcoming annual meeting.

(Eiji Yutani, Chairperson)
Subcommittee on Publications

During the past year the Subcommittee has produced numbers 59, 60, and 61 of the CEAL Bulletin. As in past issues, these three numbers have attempted to keep readers of the Bulletin informed of the professional activities of individual CEAL members, developments in East Asian collections, new publications, the results of conferences related to East Asian libraries, as well as the activities of CEAL itself, and its Subcommittees. In addition, the Bulletin has sought to keep the CEAL membership abreast of a number of critical issues, such as in the field of library automation and the romanization of Chinese (in pinyin or Wade-Giles), of developments with respect to libraries and the book trade in the Far East, and of the results of various surveys conducted by CEAL members.

Although the editor of the Bulletin has experienced some difficulty in maintaining its publication schedule, the functional division of labor among the members of the Subcommittee has remained a workable method of operation. The responsibility for soliciting and assembling material continues to be conscientiously and ably performed by members assigned to the various areas of East Asia, Eugene Carvalho, Sungha Kim, and William S. Wong; the staff of the East Asian Collection of Yale University, under the direction of the CEAL Chairperson, Hideo Kaneko, has effectively taken on the onerous task of manuscript preparation; and for their continuing achievements with respect to the printing and distribution of the Bulletin, a special measure of appreciation is due P. K. Yu and the members of his staff at the ARL Center for Chinese Research Materials.

(Richard C. Howard, Chairperson)

Subcommittee on Resources and Development

The Subcommittee was organized in 1974 primarily for planning national programs for future development of East Asian libraries in North America; however, the major effort in this area has been borne first by the ACLS Steering Committee for a Study of the Problems of East Asian Libraries and now by the ACLS/ARL/SSRC Joint Advisory Committee on East Asian Library Program. As reported in the various issues of the Bulletin, the members of the subcommittee have been heavily involved in these two committees.

The last survey of collection growth of East Asian libraries was taken in 1975, and this year is another important survey year; the subcommittee will distribute survey forms in June, and your cooperation in once again jointly taking a stock of our effort will be appreciated.

(Hideo Kaneko, Acting Chairperson)
Subcommittee on Technical Processing

The Subcommittee on Technical Processing (CEAL/STP) in 1979-80 has as its members Effie Y.H. Chen (Princeton), Lawrence H. Chen (LC), Yoon-whan Choe (Washington, Seattle), Boksoon Hahn (Yale), Ayako Hayashi (LC), Paul J. Ho (Pittsburgh), Henry C. Hsing (Toronto), Hisayuki Ishimatsu (Chicago), Thomas H. Lee (Wisconsin - Chairperson), Arthur M. Miyazaki (California, Berkeley), and Ryoko Toyama (Oregon).

In March 1979, at the AAS Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, the Subcommittee held a special meeting to discuss the problem of Chinese romanization, or more precisely, the question of whether libraries should use pinyin, the official Chinese phonetic alphabet, as a new system to romanize Chinese, replacing the traditional Wade-Giles system. That meeting set the tone and focus of the Subcommittee's work throughout the year. From May to July, CEAL/STP conducted an extensive survey among librarians and the teaching faculty to poll opinions on the question. A final report on the results of the survey was prepared and sent to all respondents at the conclusion of the survey, with statistics showing that out of the 264 respondents, 120 voted for the continual use of Wade-Giles for pinyin, and 56 urged more careful study of the question. (The final report was published in the CEAL Bulletin, No. 59, June 1979, and updated in No. 60 November 1979.)

In addition to the survey, CEAL/STP contacted major libraries in Asia and Europe to ascertain their practices concerning the romanization of Chinese materials and their attitudes toward pinyin. Responses from these libraries were submitted to CEAL to help form an official CEAL position statement on pinyin. (These were also published in the CEAL Bulletin, No. 59 and 60).

CEAL/STP members also investigated the technical problems which a switch to pinyin would cause. A number of discoveries and suggestions have been made and are now under careful examination.

During the past year, CEAL/STP's relations with the American Library Association have been further strengthened after the CEAL/STP Chairperson, Thomas H. Lee, was invited to serve as the first Chairperson of the new ALA Committee on Cataloging: Asian and African Materials. The new ALA committee devoted a great deal of its attention to the problem of Chinese romanization (pinyin vs Wade-Giles) at the June 1979 ALA Annual Conference in Dallas, and again at the 1980 ALA Midwinter Conference held in Chicago January 20-25.

(Thomas H. Lee, Chairperson)