Appendix

Richard C. Howard

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APPENDIX

(Reproduced below for the information of our readers is the text of a letter dated July 13, 1982 from Richard C. Howard, Chairperson of CEAL, to Joseph H. Howard, Assistant Librarian for Processing Services, Library of Congress.)

Dear Joe:

I am writing on behalf of the Committee on East Asian Libraries to convey to you a question of increasing concern to East Asian librarians. The question is whether the Library of Congress will continue the production of printed cards for its Chinese, Japanese, and Korean catalog records in vernacular characters and in romanization after LC has begun to input these records into the RLIN database, in accordance with the LC-RLG agreement of November, 1979. Widespread interest in this question was voiced by the CEAL membership at its annual meeting this April in Chicago; and expressions of concern were reiterated by East Asian librarians at separate conferences, sponsored by the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, held at the University of Michigan in May, and at Columbia University in June.

For over 30 years the Library of Congress has distributed printed cards bearing the catalog records of CJK materials in the vernacular characters and in romanization. During this period, East Asian libraries in this country, regardless of size, have become increasingly dependent upon these cards for the cataloging and bibliographic control of their collections. The continued availability of LC printed cards for CJK materials is now of such critical importance that it cannot be overemphasized.

The special value of these LC cards to East Asian libraries is that they contain full bibliographic records in the vernacular scripts as well as in romanization. We understand that for materials in a number of non-roman alphabets LC has prepared catalog records in romanization only, and it is possible that such records may be functional and hence sufficient to meet the minimal needs of library users of materials in these languages. But in the case of CJK materials, catalog records in romanization only would be quite inadequate because of the non-reversible, and hence highly ambiguous East Asian romanization schemes. While they might serve the limited purpose of bibliographic searching, by specially trained library staff, for known authors and titles, CJK records in romanization would, in most cases, be incomprehensible to library users without the addition of the East Asian script characters. This has been the long established consensus of scholars and librarians in the East Asian field (confirmed by CEAL survey of January 1979, see enclosure # 1), and was the major premise upon which the need for the RLG East Asia Program was originally based.
CEAL applauds the progress that has been made by RLG, with assistance from LC, in its program to input, store, and retrieve CJK vernacular records in an automated mode. However, it would appear to us that the availability of the LC records in the RLIN database will be limited to those relatively few libraries that (1) are members of RLG, and (2) will have the special terminals required to access this database. (Not all RLG libraries with East Asian collections have agreed to purchase these special terminals.) To the majority of East Asian collections, the full CJK records that LC will input into the RLIN database in both the vernacular characters and in romanization will be readily accessible only if LC continues to distribute its printed cards in East Asian languages.

For the reasons noted above, the Committee on East Asian Libraries urges the Library of Congress to continue the production and distribution of its CJK printed cards, at least until such time that the full LC records input into the RLIN database can be made readily available to all East Asian libraries and to their users throughout the nation.

Your favorable response to this question will be most deeply appreciated by the entire East Asian studies community both in this country and abroad.

Sincerely,

Richard C. Howard
Chairperson

Enclosures:  # 1. CEAL survey on romanizing East Asian records.
# 2. Holdings of East Asian Materials in American Libraries, as of June 30, 1980, indicating RLG libraries that have ordered CJK terminals, as of June, 1982.

cc: Members of CEAL Executive Group