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Computerized Cataloging of East Asian Vernacular Materials in Non-RLIN Libraries of North America

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The main purpose of this survey was to find out how other non-RLIN East Asian libraries have been cataloging East Asian vernacular materials, and to find out for our own library at the University of Oregon a good solution for computerization of these materials. The survey was intended neither to be very comprehensive in scope nor to find a solution for all non-RLIN libraries. Therefore, the questionnaires have been kept as simple and short as possible, in order to receive the maximum number of responses.

Since the late 1960s, the use of computerized records for the bibliographic control of, and access to, Western-language library collections has gradually become a way of life among librarians and library users in this country. In recent years, the challenge of applying automation technologies to processing library materials in East Asian languages has been successfully undertaken by the Research Libraries Group (RLG).

The East Asian Program of RLG was founded in 1979 to include computerized bibliographic records of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean (CJK) vernacular materials in the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN) database. The Transtech International Corporation developed and manufactured an RLIN-CJK terminal capable of inputting, displaying, and printing Chinese, Japanese kana, and Korean han'gul characters in addition to the standard roman alphabet. In addition to shared cataloging, the system serves the member libraries for other purposes which include online reference for patrons, interlibrary loan requests, preorder searching, acquisitions processing, and catalog maintenance.

As of January 1985, there are twenty-two RLIN-CJK participating members: fifteen full members, five associate members, and two special members. RLIN-CJK terminals were installed in the libraries at Columbia and Princeton University and the Library of Congress (LC) in June 1983, and later in other participating libraries. In September 1983, LC created its first online cataloging record containing Chinese vernacular scripts in the RLIN database. Simultaneously, other members started to enter their cataloging records into the RLIN database.

During July and August 1983, my questionnaires were sent out to sixty-eight non-RLIN libraries having East Asian collections. Of these libraries, forty-five returned the questionnaires. Among the respondents, thirty-four libraries are OCLC (Online Catalog Library Center) members.

Only eight libraries, out of thirty-four OCLC members, have been inputting romanized cataloging records of East Asian vernacular materials in the OCLC database. And of these eight libraries, only three libraries input cataloging records of both monographs and serials: Ohio State University enters its records of Japanese and Korean language materials only; Indiana University inputs its records of Japanese and Korean language materials and some Chinese materials; and the Center for Research Libraries enters its cataloging records of CJK languages. Among these three institutions, only Ohio State and Indiana add Asian scripts on their romanized
catalog cards. The other five libraries enter only records of serials in the database, and, with the exception of the University of Wisconsin, add no Asian scripts on their catalog cards.

Twenty-one libraries indicate that production of cataloging records of East Asian vernacular materials (monographs and serials) in romanization only is unsatisfactory to librarians and users, but six libraries indicate otherwise. Two libraries state that cataloging of East Asian serials records in romanization only may be satisfactory to both librarians and users.

Twelve libraries maintain that it is totally undesirable to input cataloging records of East Asian vernacular publications into the existing OCLC database since the OCLC system has no capability for handling CJK scripts, and it can produce only romanized records. These libraries further point out the following: (1) it is not practical; (2) records will be unintelligible; (3) romanization cannot be readily reconverted into Oriental scripts; (4) it is very difficult, if not impossible, to figure out the exact words from romanization of homophonous characters; (5) many characters can be read in more than one way in Japanese; (6) romanized cataloging records would be severely limited bibliographic tools.

Among those answering the survey, fifteen libraries indicated their wishes to join the RLIN-CJK system. Besides these fifteen libraries, probably more libraries (those which did not return the survey, and those which were not included in the survey) also wish to use the RLIN-CJK system. There has been an atmosphere of undecidedness among non-RLIN libraries regarding whether or not to take part in the RLIN-CJK system. Several factors are involved, including the lack of adequate knowledge of the system, budget problems, and special conditions in the individual libraries. Under these circumstances, non-RLIN members have managed to find the best solution for themselves. Fourteen academic libraries decided to continue to produce their cataloging records on traditional catalog cards containing East Asian scripts. In fact, only two academic libraries, which have good-sized East Asian collections, have been cataloging vernacular materials into the OCLC database and adding Asian characters on catalog cards. Five other academic libraries believe that it may be desirable to enter cataloging records into the OCLC database and to produce traditional catalog cards with Asian scripts. Two non-academic libraries decided to produce only romanized records through the OCLC system.

Some other solutions have been suggested: (1) Try hard to obtain an external subsidy individually or jointly (from individuals, institutions, or foundations) and then join the RLIN-CJK system; (2) urge OCLC to develop a CJK system capable of inputting, displaying, and printing CJK characters (in addition to the standard roman alphabet); (3) purchase an in-house version of the CJK system (e.g., Sinoterm from the Transtech International Corporation); (4) apply, two or three libraries together, for a joint membership in the RLIN-CJK system; (5) make a special arrangement with an RLIN-CJK participating member to put cataloging records in the RLIN database.

Other than those suggestions mentioned above, I think, there is another solution which deserves mentioning. Those non-RLIN libraries which are interested only in searching the RLIN database may arrange with the RLIN for search-only services. In this way, a library can retrieve a great number of cataloging records which were entered by LC and the other twenty-one RLIN-CJK participating members.

This survey cannot speak for the status of cataloging at non-RLIN libraries which did not respond to the survey or were not included in it. Other than those
libraries which returned the questionnaires, there are over a dozen libraries (academic, public, or museum) that have been sporadically entering their romanized records of East Asian vernacular materials in the OCLC database. The size of these records is still very small.

After my questionnaires were sent out and some institutions returned them, OCLC President Rowland C. W. Brown announced in October 1983 that OCLC and Asigraphics of New York had entered into negotiations leading toward the development of a CJK library support package. The distinctive feature of this system is that it uses the phonetic approach rather than the graphic character component approach which the RLIN-CJK system uses. It requires no specially-designed CJK-script keyboard, and a standard roman typewriter keyboard is used for inputting. Details of the OCLC/Asigraphics system can be found in their announcements. Demonstrations of the system have already been held at several locations. Neither OCLC nor Asigraphics has announced the exact date when the system will become operative. It was reported that Asigraphics would deliver its local software to OCLC in February 1985, and the OCLC-CJK program may become available before the end of 1985.

Those libraries which are not users of the RLIN-CJK system feel as if they have been left out of the system. Each of them has to cope with the problem of automated cataloging by other means. Below I will try to bring out and discuss how non-users of the RLIN-CJK system can benefit from LC's services under these circumstances.

Beginning mid-summer 1983, LC has included romanized records for its Chinese, Japanese, and Korean monographs in the MARC Distribution Service (MDS) offered by the Cataloging Distribution Service (CDS). In September 1983 LC entered its first cataloging records with CJK vernacular scripts into the RLIN database. As of November 1984, LC was inputting approximately 25% of its cataloging records of monographs directly into the RLIN system. It is anticipated that LC will gradually increase the percentage of its inputting into the RLIN database, and eventually 100% of its CJK monographic cataloging will be entered into the RLIN system sometime in 1985. In the interim, records for the remaining 75% of the CJK monographic cataloging are being produced and distributed by LC in the same manner as its regular cataloging. Romanized cataloging records are created on LC's internal online system and the machine-readable records for these titles are distributed monthly by the CDS. There are no vernacular characters in these machine-readable records because LC's computer can only process romanized data. Subscribers to LC's MARC distribution records include both OCLC and RLG. Currently these bibliographic utilities are adding LC's romanized CJK records to their databases from these tapes. LC does not enter the romanized records of CJK monographs directly into databases of these two systems. Therefore, users of the OCLC system currently have access to about 75% of these LC's romanized cataloging records of CJK monographs. These records are the 75% of CJK cataloging not currently being input directly into the RLIN-CJK system. At the present, this means that RLIN users have access to 100% of LC's current CJK cataloging: 75% are romanized records loaded at RLIN from LC tapes and 25% are CJK vernacular and romanized records input directly into the RLIN database by LC-CJK catalogers.

It may be important to notice that LC's CJK RLIN records, which represent approximately 25% of the total LC-CJK monographic cataloging, are not yet available in romanization (on tape or microfiche) to MARC or NUC subscribers. Originally, it was anticipated that by mid-1984 tapes of the LC's CJK RLIN records would be provided to LC by RLIN for inclusion in LC's computer system; at that point, LC
would load the romanized portion of the records into its internal system for local use; and these romanized records would then be available for searching and retrieval in LC's system and for distributing through the MDS. However, these earlier plans have been modified. LC is planning to distribute tapes of its combined vernacular and romanized CJK records through the MDS. Consequently, OCLC, as a MARC subscriber, will have access to 100% of LC's romanized vernacular records as they become available from the MDS. But no firm date has been set for the inauguration of this service; it is anticipated that it will be sometime in 1985.

It is important to mention, here, that between the time LC begins inputting 100% of its CJK monograph cataloging into the RLIN system and the time that these CJK records are available through the MDS, OCLC users (or non-RLIN libraries) will not be able to access new LC-CJK cataloging records. This may cause considerable concern to non-RLIN institutions, and it is hoped that this hiatus will be brief.

In regards to CJK serials, as a participant in the CONSER project, LC enters its serials cataloging into the OCLC system. Thus, LC's romanized records for CJK serials appear in the OCLC system.

As to LC's card catalogs, the production of CJK catalog cards is unaffected since LC began automated cataloging of CJK vernacular materials, and LC continues to make them available to subscribers on the same basis and in the same time frame as before. Both LC's romanized CJK catalog records produced at LC and also LC's vernacular CJK cataloging records created through the RLIN system are being produced with vernacular script on LC catalog cards. At the present time, the only way a subscriber can have access to 100% of LC's CJK monographic cataloging records in vernacular script is via LC printed catalog cards. More specifically, LC's CJK catalog cards with vernacular scripts represent all of LC's CJK monographic cataloging. Thus, only libraries which are both subscribers to LC's catalog card service and also members of the RLIN-CJK system currently have access to 100% of LC's vernacular CJK cataloging records (produced both at LC and through the RLIN system). Information recorded on those LC catalog cards which bear the letters "MARC" can be retrieved from MARC tapes distributed by the MDS. LC's romanized cataloging records of CJK materials are also being made available in the NUC on microfiche which are distributed to subscribers.

As stated above, non-RLIN libraries have access to LC's cataloging records of CJK materials via its MARC tapes, catalog cards, and/or NUC on microfiche. According to my own experience during 1984 at the University of Oregon, LC's romanized cataloging records of CJK materials could be retrieved through MARC tapes which are loaded into OCLC's database earlier than LC's catalog cards are produced; the NUC on microfiche became available much later than MARC tapes and catalog cards.

When the OCLC-CJK system becomes operative and proves to be a good, workable system, a considerable number of libraries which have East Asian collections may wish to use it. At that time, a new survey may be a welcome undertaking. However, the availability and quality of this system is yet to be seen.

With the exception of the Harvard-Yenching Library, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Washington, all universities which have major East Asian collections have joined the RLIN-CJK system. The total holdings of the East Asian materials of these twenty-two RLIN-CJK participants in 1980 represented about 57.8% of the total holdings of East Asian materials in North American libraries. LC's holdings of CJK materials in 1980 constituted about 15.8% of the total CJK materials in North America. In the same year, the combined holdings of
the Harvard-Yenching Library, UC (Berkeley), and the University of Washington comprised about 16.2% of North America's total holdings of CJK materials. Were the Harvard-Yenching Library, UC (Berkeley), and Washington to participate in the OCLC-CJK system, the cataloging records in the OCLC database would be greatly enlarged and the hit rate (or availability) would rise significantly. Without the cataloging records of LC and/or these three universities, the users of the OCLC-CJK system may find the hit rate to be very low, and the system consequently not very meaningful.

The utilization of varied technical support systems by the research library community has unfortunately created, for a period of time, inconveniences to users in gaining access to information on CJK materials. This situation may change when LC starts to distribute tapes of its combined vernacular and romanized CJK records through the MDS, or if the major networks (RLIN, OCLC, WLN, etc.) begin to interface. Will the dream of the interface of these three systems come true? Let's cherish the hope.

By sharing the results of my survey with the respondents and with other libraries, I hope that this survey may benefit them in finding the best solution for their own libraries. I am most grateful to all colleagues who kindly answered my survey and provided me with valuable information. Without their unselfish participation and assistance, this survey could not have been completed.

NOTES

1. This survey does not intend to include activities involving the WLN (Washington Library Network) and the UTLAS (University of Toronto Library Automation Systems).

2. Full members: Brigham Young University, Brown University, Columbia University, Columbia Law School, Cornell University, Hoover Institution (Stanford University), University of Iowa, University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, New York Public Library, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, Rutgers University, and Yale University. Associate members: University of Chicago, University of Hawaii, University of Illinois, University of Toronto, and University of Wisconsin. Special members: Library of Congress, Los Angeles County Library (Project Asia).

3. The eight libraries are: American Museum of Natural History, Arizona State University, University of California at San Diego, Center for Research Libraries, Indiana University, National Agricultural Library, Ohio State University, and University of Wisconsin. The East Asian Collection of the University of Wisconsin became an associate member of RLIN-CJK system in 1984.

4. Ohio State University Library and Indiana University Library, which in 1980 had 75,838 volumes and 106,259 volumes respectively.

5. The University of Illinois and the University of Wisconsin who submitted a joint proposal to the Lilly Foundation, succeeded in receiving a grant from the Foundation to purchase RLIN-CJK terminals.
6. According to information provided to me by RLG, as of November 1984 there are 261 institutions using RLIN Search-only Services. An interested institution may sign the RLIN Bibliographic Data Base Searching Agreement. A start-up fee of $198.00 is charged for opening an account, then searching access to the RLIN database is presently available at the basic rate of $63.00 per connect hour. The special databases are available at the basic rate of $63.00 plus $31.50 per connect hour. A minimum monthly charge for fifteen minutes of connect time is charged to search-only users. Since CJK records are in the RLIN central database, all users may access the records through a general-purpose or multi-purpose terminal; but only the romanization in the records can be displayed and printed.

7. These libraries are: Cleveland Museum of Art, Detroit Public Library, George Washington University, Kern County Library System, Minneapolis Public Library, National Security Agency, Ohio University, State University of New York at Buffalo, Stockton-San Joaquin Public Library, University of California at San Francisco, University of Delaware, University of Texas at Dallas, Wellesley College, and Wittenberg University.

8. The package and a CJK word processor developed by Asiagraphics will be marketed by OCLC. The system is expected to enable users to retrieve transliterated CJK records from the OCLC database and display on the terminal screen or print out these records in CJK scripts using a dot-matrix printer attached to the OCLC M300 workstation. The software for processing Chinese language materials will be able to support both the Wade-Giles and pinyin transliteration schemes as well as full and simplified character sets.

9. LC is planning to select a firm which is capable of producing CJK catalog cards directly from tapes of their RLIN-CJK cataloging records. Until this capacity is implemented, LC cards for these records will continue to be manually type-set.

10. There are currently two types of romanized CJK records in the NUC: (1) romanized full-level CJK JACKPHY MARC records, and (2) romanized CJK records which do not contain subject heading or added entries. LC's RLIN-produced romanized cataloging records do not currently appear in the NUC, but it is anticipated that these records will be included in the NUC sometime in 1985.

11. See the holdings shown on page 74 of CEAL Bulletin, nos. 70/71 (February/June, 1983).