Some Notes on Cataloging East Asian Serials

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Serial cataloging is governed by chapter 12 of AACR2R (chapter 12), corresponding LC rule interpretations (RI), CONSER guidelines, and last, but certainly not least, an elusive, unwritten, and unofficial body of procedures called "convention." With such a large accumulation of rules, explanations, and advice, the cataloging of serials should not be a very difficult task. However, my experience, and that of many others, indicates that just the opposite is true.

It is well known that very few people graduate from library school with the experience and knowledge necessary to start cataloging serials without extensive on-the-job training. Chapter 12 is sketchy at best. The rule interpretations do not even cover half of the basic problems encountered in day-to-day work. The CONSER Editing Guide, while helpful, is by no means definitive and only adds to the confusion of the uninitiated. Serial cataloging "convention" is akin to oral literature and is handed down from one cataloger to another: some hear the stories and some do not. Fundamentally, we all learn to catalog serials by reading chapter 12, studying LC examples, and direct instruction from experienced catalogers. I have worked at three major institutions cataloging East Asian serials and have found definite variations in cataloging practice at all three. Naturally there is considerable variety in LC copy as well as in records input by OCLC and RLIN members. Some of the variations are minor and of little consequence. Others present problems of a more serious nature ... especially to those who "carefully follow the rules."

In the process of recataloging the East Asian serials at the Harvard Law School Library, I ran afoul of "the rules" and CONSER practice more than a few times. It soon became evident, if it hadn't been before, that AACR2R and its associated tools were created in a Western language environment and could not possibly include rules to apply to situations peculiar to Chinese, Japanese, and Korean works. As more and more records were questioned by my reviser and/or the CONSER Office in Widener Library, more and more questions went to the Library of Congress for solution. As a result, we discovered new ways of doing things, abandoned a few familiar old practices, and, happily, confirmed many past procedures as acceptable. In this article I would like to share some of what we have learned with other catalogers who may be interested. Some of what follows is general in nature and is drawn from sections in the rules that seem to me to be unclear or ambiguous on certain points. Other matters covered relate only to East Asian serials.

Some Basic Concepts

The CONSER Program
Before dealing with specific examples, it might be worthwhile to touch on some of the major characteristics of the CONSER program for the benefit of those who are not participants and may be unfamiliar with some of the guidelines.
A CONSER record is supposed to be a national level record for any given serial title. Ideally, it is a complete record which should contain all pertinent information about the title. This means that individual libraries do not remove information from serial records that does not apply to their own holdings. For example, the description based on note in a record might give "Vol. 3 (1930)" as the issue in hand. Another library which has volume 9 published in 1936 as its earliest issue would not change the note to reflect its own holdings because this would in effect "downgrade" the record. However, if another library had volume 2 published in 1929, the note could be changed to reflect the earlier issue. Similarly, added entries for issuing bodies, other title information, and notes containing information that do not appear in issues held by the cataloging library are not removed from the record. Completed information in the 260, 300, and 362 fields on the record for a dead serial would not be deleted because a cataloging library does not have the first and/or last issue. However, if a cataloger has reason to believe that any or all of the information provided is incorrect, the entire record can be altered to reflect the piece in hand.

These procedures run counter to the belief that serial records should be based only on an institution's own holdings so as not to "mislead" readers by implying that the library has something which in reality it does not. Many times I have seen cataloging assistants take utility knife and liquid paper to LC printed cards to alter data and avoid "misleading" readers. This practice is very disturbing to some while others find it quite appropriate. In any case, there are, in East Asian circles at least, two schools of thought on this matter and it is helpful to bear this in mind when working with records from printed catalogs and data bases.

The Chief Source of Information

The chief source of information for printed serials is the title page. It is found at the beginning of an item and contains the title proper and often a statement of responsibility and/or publication data. Any page that contains additional information is not considered a title page. Consequently, a page listing an editorial staff is an editorial page and a page which has a table of contents is a contents page. Note especially that neither of these pages are title pages by definition, regardless of placement in the issue or the prominent presence of a title proper.

Likewise, the title page for a separately-issued volume which is produced after the completion of the first volume is not a title page for cataloging purposes. Due to these restrictions, catalogers most often make use of a title page substitute which is selected in the following order of preference as stated in AACR2R 12.0B1:

- Cover
- Caption
- Masthead
- Editorial pages
- Colophon
- Other pages

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Title page substitutes are not subject to the strict definition applied to the "title page." Thus, the presence of a table of contents on the cover does not disqualify that page as a title page substitute.

East Asian catalogers are especially fond of colophons and tend to prefer them over other prescribed sources both in serials and monographs because the colophon is where "the publisher puts the official information." AACR2R rule 12.0B1 permits the colophon to be the chief source of information in "an oriental nonroman script printed serial if the colophon contains full bibliographic information and the following conditions apply:

a) the page standing in the position of a title page bears only the title proper
or b) the title page bears only a calligraphic version of the title proper
or c) the title page bears only a western-language version of the title proper and other bibliographic information.

These conditions are fairly restrictive and will not often be encountered. It should be emphasized that the colophon does not take prominence over the cover as a title page substitute.

The selection and use of a "title page" or title page substitute plays an important role in the descriptive portion of a serial record and it is important to understand how the rules operate in this area if one desires to catalog according to the rules.

The Specifics

Titles

Most of us have little difficulty in determining the title proper of a serial. There are, however, a few problem areas. One of these problem areas involves words denoting frequency such as と and に which come at the beginning of a title. At one time it was common practice to drop these words. Current practice is to include them as part of the 245 field if they appear on the chief source.

In a similar vein, it was once accepted practice to drop from the title proper the name of an institution which appeared in smaller print as the head of the title on the chief source. Typography is of much less concern under AACR2 than in earlier rules and the current practice is to include such institutional names as part of the title proper and give the typographically prominent portion in a 246 field. This is not to say that typography is currently of no concern. Take, for example, a serial which began with the title proper of Aoyama hōgaku ronshū and later appeared as Kikan Aoyama hōgaku ronshū.
Since "kikan" is in quite small type and does not appear in the colophon, LC does not consider this to be a title change. What we have here is the simple addition of a statement of frequency. However, had the "kikan" appeared in larger type on the chief source, it would have been a title change.

Another troublesome problem in titles is the occurrence of numbers and East Asian calendrical dates. This most often occurs with annual publications but can also be seen in other types of serials. Many East Asian catalogers, including some at LC, have regarded East Asian numbering to be somewhat different than Western numbering. The thinking is that it is the number itself and not the ordinal prefix that changes and so the 245 field in the following example should be recorded as: "Dai ... shutsunyūkoku kanri tōkei nenpō." Due to the influence of AACR2R Appendix C.8C and 12.1B7, LC had concluded that both the number and the ordinal prefix are to be dropped from the 245 field and the title recorded as: "Shutsunyūkoku kanri tōkei nenpō." The same is true for a title which begins with a reign date. Both Shōwa and the year are dropped from the title unless the reign date is grammatically linked to the rest of the title by a phrase such as "ni okeru" as in the title: "Shōwa 55-nen ni okeru mayaku kakuseizai no gaikyō." In such a case, the title is recorded as "Shōwa ... -nen ni okeru mayaku kakuseizai no gaikyō."

Numeric and Chronological Designations

Choosing the correct numeric and chronological designation can also be a problem when more than one system is used on the same issue. For cataloging purposes, the choice is largely governed by the rules. Chapter 12, rule 12.3B2 instructs: "If a nu-
meric and/or alphabetic designation appears in more than one script, give the designation that is in the language or script of the title proper." Although it does not say so, the designations in more than one script or language referred to in the rule must all be on the chief source in order for a selection to be made on the aforementioned terms. This is elaborated on in RI 12.3B1 (Library of Congress Cataloging Service Bulletin (CSB), No. 23 (Winter 1983): 19) which states: "record the numeric and/or alphabetic designation according to the way it appears on the chief source." This is illustrated in the examples below.
The numeric designation on the cover is "1983.1." The contents page and colophon both give "1983 nien 1 chi ti (tsung ti 1 chi ti)" and "1983 nien 10 yueh chu pan." In this case, the cover is the title page substitute and functions as the chief source. Consequently, the designation is taken from the cover and recorded in the 362 field as: "1983,1-." The continuous number (which is referred to as an alternative numbering system) is handled in accordance with RI 12.3E: "Give in a note information about a second or third system of numeric/alphabetic designation that either does not identify the item or does not appear in the same source with the first system ..." The corresponding note would be: "Issues for Oct. 1983- called also tsung 1 chi ti- ". The next question that arises in connection with this title is the issue of the chronological designation.
Since there is no date on the cover, there is no chronological designation as far as the rules are concerned. The "1983 nien 10 yileh chu pan" is not and cannot be used as a chronological designation because it is a publication date. The added table-of-contents page in English bears what is undeniably a chronological designation, namely: "October 1983." In accordance with the rules, the 362 field could be recorded as: "1983, 1 [Oct. 1983]." There is nothing in writing that prohibits this, however (and here is where practice and convention enter the picture), LC prefers to keep the body of the description in one language and would not include the date in English taken from the added contents page. CONSER participants follow LC practice in this regard.

"Founding" Issues

The previous two examples are more or less covered by the rules. The use of the term 領首 which is unique to East Asian serials is not. LC practice is to record 領首 in the 362 field when it is the only numeric designation on the chief source. If both 領首 and a volume and issue number appear on the chief source, 領首 is ignored and the volume and issue number are recorded in the 362 field. In cases where 領首 is recorded in the 362 field, LC leaves it to the cataloger's discretion whether or not to add a note describing the numbering system used elsewhere in the first issue or on succeeding issues. Such a note could read: "Issue for June 1967 called also: che I-ho."

It should be noted on the topic of numbering that dual numbering systems are not recorded together in the description based on note even if they appear together on
the chief source. If the cover of an issue gives numeric designations such as "ti 4 chüan ti 8 ch'i" as the main system and "tsung ti 43 ch'i" as the alternative numbering system, this is recorded in two notes as follows:

Description based on: Ti 4 chüan ti 8 ch'i, published in Aug. 1973; title from cover.

Issues for <Aug. 1963-> called also <tsung ti 43 ch'i->

Notes and the Extent of Information Provided

There is some debate on the subject of how much information a serial record should contain and how much time and effort should be expended in ascertaining what are often very involved changes in issuing bodies, numbering systems, and publishing patterns (frequencies). Opinion runs from recording as little as possible to tracking down and recording as many "significant" changes and variations as possible. The former view is espoused by managers, head catalogers, and others who are concerned with cost effectiveness and do not believe in "spoon-feeding readers." They feel that a plethora of notes relating to changes in frequencies, numbering systems, and issuing bodies is wasteful and meaningless to the reader. On the other end of the spectrum are many reference librarians, detail-oriented catalogers, and most certainly interlibrary loan people. The first element in this troika is well represented by Mr. Eizaburo Okuizumi (a well-known serials enthusiast) of the University of Chicago who maintains that the accurate recording of numbering information and frequencies is essential for effective serials control. The strict recording of changes in issuing bodies is also very valuable in the reference process, according to Mr. Okuizumi. Interlibrary loan staff are often able to sort out a poorly-cited request on the basis of a "full" serial record. Reference people, especially those who do not read Chinese, Japanese, or Korean, are particularly avid supporters of "extra" information on the bibliographical record.

Whether you find yourself on the "more" or "less" side of the debate, certain circumstances often call for notes of one kind or another describing numbering irregularities or suspension of publication and I would like to submit two observations on such notes.

If a monthly periodical fails to publish the March and April issues one year, let us record this in a note as: "Vol. 5, no. 3-4 not published." rather than simply: Vol. five complete in 10 nos."

For a periodical which was issued from January 1950 to May 1961 and August 1969 to December 1985, I would suggest that the note read: "Suspended June 1961-July 1969." rather than "Suspended May 1961-Aug. 1969." I have seen both methods applied and find the latter to be misleading, if not inaccurate.

Before we leave the subject of numbering, it should be mentioned that the abbreviation "no." is not used in the collation. The only approved designation is "v." regardless of what numbering the issues carry.
East Asian Publication Dates

Multiple non-Gregorian years which are qualified with equivalent years in the Gregorian calendar are recorded in the following manner as prescribed in the RI for 1.4F8 (CSB, No. 45 (Summer 1989): 12):

Shōwa 22-Shōwa 45 [1947-1970]

An open publication statement is recorded as:

Shōwa 22- [1947-

Note that the reign date is repeated in the first example. The form, "Showa 22-45 [1947-1970]," is not acceptable.

Language

One can find many variations in language notes on serial records from all sources and it would seem that catalogers have some latitude in this area.

Basically, if a serial is entirely in Chinese, for example, with no added title or table of contents in another language, there is no need for a language note. If the serial had a parallel title in English (but text completely in Chinese), convention would call for the language note: "In Chinese." This much is relatively certain.

Added tables of contents and summaries in Western languages constitute a gray area. LC's general policy is to omit notes describing either feature. CONSER participants, however, may include such notes on their records. I feel that such notes can be of value to researchers and reference people and that we would do well to include them on our records.

Supplements

East Asian serials are rife with supplements and extra numbers of various kinds. If a supplement is included within the main numbering system of a serial, no note is made regarding the presence of supplements. For example:

Vol. 3, no. 1 (Jan. 1978)
Vol. 3, no. 2 (Feb. 1978)
Vol. 3, no. 3: Supplement (Feb. 1978)
Vol. 4, no. 4 (Mar. 1978)

No note.
Unnumbered supplements require a note.

Vol. 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1980)
Vol. 2, no. 2 (Feb. 1980)

Supplement to vol. 2, no. 2 (Feb. 1980)

Vol. 3, no. 3 (Mar. 1980)

Note: "Supplements accompany some issues."

Supplements which have their own numeric and/or alphabetic chronological designation are usually cataloged separately.

I hope that these few observations may be of some assistance to those who find themselves cataloging East Asian serials. In conclusion, I would like to thank Mr. Ben Tucker and Ms. Dorothy Glasby of the Library of Congress for their thorough and cheerful replies to my many questions. I also want to thank Ms. Sandra Hopkins and Mr. John B. Hostage, my colleagues in the Catalog Department at the Harvard Law School Library, for their counsel and advice on serial cataloging problems.