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From the President

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings from Hong Kong! Since I have been in Hong Kong for less than two months, I have not had much time to explore the library scene yet. Nevertheless I am already impressed by some cooperative projects as well as the common deployment of Chinese script in library operation.

The more established universities in Hong Kong are supported by the government, and the libraries of these seven universities have formed a Joint University Libraries Advisory Committee (JULAC). One of its initial accomplishments was the formation of a JULAC Resource Database which includes the bibliographic records of its member libraries plus recent records acquired from the National Beijing Library, the National Central Library and the Library of Congress (CJK titles only). While the main purpose of the database is for library staff use, some libraries allow public access to this data. On a smaller scale, six theological libraries formed an Ecumenical Information Network (EIN) Library Union Catalog which currently has about 150,000 records.

It is my belief that we should rely more on the bibliographic records produced by the various national libraries, if they are current and of high quality. Most East Asian national libraries have reached that stage. The Library of Congress, OCLC and RLG have been trying to acquire records from the National Diet Library for a long time. Hopefully these records will be available in the near future. Perhaps it is now time to investigate the possibility of acquiring other national MARC records.

Most East Asian librarians in North America are frustrated that their library’s OPAC cannot handle non-roman scripts. The common deployment of Asian scripts in libraries in East Asia shows that it is not a question of capability but one of priority. If we can convince our library administrators of the importance of the original script, they can demand that vendors produce the required integrated library system almost overnight. It should not be a pipe dream. We have waited long enough.

Tai-loi Ma
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