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From the President

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am pleased -- and still a bit startled -- to be writing the introduction to this issue of the Journal of East Asian Libraries. As most of you undoubtedly know by now, Tai-Loi Ma resigned as CEAL President shortly after the March 1999 CEAL Conference, instantly (and quite unexpectedly) elevating me from "President-Elect" to "Acting President" of the Council on East Asian Libraries. On behalf of all CEAL members, I would like to express thanks to Tai-Loi for his many years of service to CEAL in numerous capacities. Though he has indicated that his current residence in Hong Kong makes it difficult for him to continue in a leadership role in CEAL, we hope that he will find a way to continue to participate regularly in CEAL activities. (Just to illustrate how long Tai-Loi has been active in CEAL, I should relate that I first met him at a CEAL-sponsored institute on Chinese cooperative cataloging at the University of Chicago in 1972 or 1973, when we were both still "wet behind the ears"!)

Secondly, I would like to express both my delight and a profound sense of humility to have the privilege to serve (and to serve with) such a talented group of interesting colleagues. As evidenced once again by our 1999 annual meeting, there continues to be not only a depth of knowledge and experience but also an abundance of innovative talent, good will, energy, commitment, and good old-fashioned hard work among our membership. I am looking forward to seeing what the next several years (and the new millennium!) will bring.

Speaking of the future, you should be aware that your newly-elected committee chairs are already planning programs for the San Diego Annual Meeting in the year 2000 with the goal of having a general program plans in place by this fall. If any of you have ideas for interesting CEAL programs (or, better yet, would like to participate personally), please contact one of the CEAL committee chairs noted on the inside front cover of this issue.

At the encouragement of one of our members, the CEAL Executive Committee at its second meeting in Boston voted to extend an invitation to Asian studies librarian colleagues from Europe to attend the San Diego meetings and to encourage them to participate in panels and presentations. Several of you have participated in international meetings with our European counterparts in the past. Perhaps we will see some interesting collaborative projects born out of this present interaction.

If it seems as though we have been talking about Pinyin conversion for a long, long time now -- we have! Yet I must report on this most important issue once again. Many CEAL members are working actively and tirelessly to ensure that we are well-prepared for this momentous change in how we catalog and access Chinese language (and China-related) publications and in how we serve our users. This effort is very ably led by members of the CEAL Pinyin Liaison Group but is by no means limited to members of that group. At the Annual Conference of the American Library Association to be held in New Orleans less than three weeks from this writing, several groups will be discussing administrative, technical, and cost factors relating to the conversion. Members of the Liaison Group as well as other CEAL members will participate in or chair these groups and share the concerns of CEAL libraries. Moreover, many of you may have seen the excellent website prepared by Fung-Yin Simpson and Vickie F. Doll entitled "Chinese Geographic Names: from Wade-Giles to Pinyin" (http://www.staff.uiuc.edu/~fyks/placename/ or http://sun3.lib.uci.edu/~olecjk/). Finally, our colleagues at the Library of Congress, at RLG,
and at OCLC are working closely with the CEAL Pinyin Liaison Group with the goal of making a difficult project proceed as smoothly as possible.

In closing, I am very pleased to announce that Gail King has agreed to continue as Chairperson of the Committee on Publications and editor of the *Journal of East Asian Libraries* through my tenure as CEAL President. Please support your journal and send her articles!

Bill McCloy
Acting President, CEAL