

**BOSTON IN LATE WINTER:
THE ASSOCIATION OF ASIAN STUDIES
46TH ANNUAL MEETING, BOSTON, March 24-27, 1994**

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I attended the Association of Asian Studies (AAS) conference, the major US Asian studies meeting, which is held in a different major city each year. It appears from our records that the last member of the National Library of Australia staff to attend was Richard Stone when AAS last met in Boston 1974. About 3,000 people attend this meeting. Almost 120 associated meetings of related groups were held in addition to the 168 sessions for academic presentations. Continuous video previews ran through each day. A trade exhibition of about 125 booths was popular, featuring book publishers and Asian software packages, mainly for word-processing.

It is impossible for one person to attend all sessions of interest. As most of the library-related sessions were held in the first couple of days, I unfortunately had to choose between up to three or four sessions. In addition to the East Asian sessions, I also attended interesting groups related to Southeast Asia.

I was given a very warm welcome and would certainly urge Australian libraries to encourage attendance, especially where the location contains an opportunity to visit major libraries or where meetings are held on the west coast.

Sessions which I attended related to East Asia were:

**Thursday 24 March 1994, 9-12 noon, 1-5 pm
Committee of East Asian Librarians (CEAL)**

At the session of the Committee of East Asian Librarians (CEAL) results of elections for office bearers for the next three years were announced with Ken Klein, University of Southern California, taking over as president from Maureen Donovan. Maureen had recommended that a secretary and treasurer also be elected to assist with the running of CEAL.

Association of Research Libraries

An interesting verbal report was given by Mrs Jutta Reid-Scott of a survey undertaken by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) of foreign acquisitions in American university libraries. East Asia was studied with the assistance of CEAL. The reports on China, Japan and Korea would be considered at a meeting in mid-April. Mrs Scott said that the key question was

document supply. She foresaw the need for digitisation of data on a network based on a co-ordinated acquisition program. The emphasis in any funding project would have to be on development of infrastructure to provide digitisation. Internet would be the prime method of delivery.

Three areas were recommended for further investigation:

1. Latin America (the Mellon Foundation would provide funding)
2. Germany (60-70 percent of all Western European acquisitions in United States universities are for German imprints)
3. Japanese language scitech serials.

(I have since received an item posted by Judith Henchy on the Cormosea listserver stating that it was decided at the ARL meeting on April 19th to accept the report and that these three trial project be tested.)

Speaking in more detail on this last project, Mrs Scott said that digitisation seemed more feasible for articles than for monographs. The National Co-ordinating Council on Japanese Materials was concentrating on the social sciences and humanities. The plan was to rationalise resources and to consider new approaches such as scanning title pages of issues as they were received.

CEAL's mission

Group discussions followed on whether CEAL should become the "Council" or "Society" of East Asian Libraries or Librarians. Among various ideas was the suggestion that there should be meetings held at the American Library Association (ALA) as well as at the Association of Asian Studies (AAS). There was also discussion on the desirability of having meetings for two clear days prior to AAS to allow uninterrupted attendance at academic sessions. There was support for the establishment of a Public Services Sub-Committee and a Program Committee to co-ordinate with AAS. It was thought that the Internet could be used more fully to supplement publications and contain costs.

Sub-Committee on Technical Processing

Carol Mandel, Deputy Librarian of Columbia University, gave a presentation on "Cataloging in the nineties: new goals in a new world". She outlined the situation which we have been discussing in the National Library of Australia, namely, how to provide access to a number of sources of data. She posed the query of whether this would reduce retrieval in the "virtual library" to the lowest common denominator because of the growing complexity of sources of data.

There were great pressures on the cataloguing process with competition for resources and fewer resources available generally. She said that there were rising expectations for improved online access with decreased tolerance for costs and cataloguing backlogs. The challenge was to produce a catalogue which was both good and affordable.

Studies of OPAC usage showed that many readers had considerable problems: they were not as methodical as librarians and many subject searches were unsuccessful.

Carol Mandel foresaw two important new developments which would help contain costs: more flexible MARC formats to allow quicker adoption of the description of yet-to-be-evolved media formats, and the importing to the United States of MARC records from more overseas countries.

Karen Smith Yoshimura expressed great doubt about this in her talk "CJK aspects of the program for co-operative cataloging". She described the cataloguing council set up in late 1993. A core bibliographic description for monographs had now been decided, with music and non-Roman scripts still to be investigated. Romanisation problems for CJK had been delegated to the Research Libraries Group. This appeared to be the first step towards incorporating Pinyin for Chinese, and other East Asian romanisation systems, into the planning of MARC records coming from the United States. She undertook to post reports on the "Foreign MARC Coalition" - part of this work - on the Eastlib news group.

Beatrice Ohta spoke about some recent Library of Congress rule interpretations in her paper "Cataloging: new developments at LC".

Subcommittee on Library Technology

Marie Sexton of the National Library of Australia gave an overview of the Australian CJK project in a paper entitled "National CJK Project".

The paper "Mosaic and the World Wide Web: possible uses for East Asian Collections" was presented by Maureen Donovan. She praised the work Tony Barry was doing at the Australian National University and the lead Australia was setting in Asian automation with projects such as their CJK project.

A paper followed on "The University of Washington's experience with Innovative Interfaces' CJK project". William McCloy from their Law Library and Robert Britt spoke.

At the roundtable "Doing research in an electronic age: teaching the resources for East, South and Southeast Asia", sponsored by the Asian Libraries Liaison Committee, the query was raised as to why Japan was so retarded in electronic

mail development, with the response that the West must pressure them into action. It was further agreed that future AAS meetings should have demonstrations.

A useful listserv I learned about is EASIG (East Asian Software Users Group), set up a young member of academic staff at George Washington University. The listserv would include the topic of optical character recognition.

At 9.15 pm the final meeting for the day was the National Co-ordinating Committee for Japanese Materials (NCC). It was particularly interesting, being in its third year of operation. Dr Amy Heinrich, Inaugural Chair of the NCC, outline their aim of representing both librarians and scholars. Dr Heinrich echoed the comments of the morning's CEAL session that there was a need to concentrate on the infrastructure for collecting and access.

Mr H. Morimoto described NCC's multi-volume series scheme, whereby libraries could acquire specific multi-volume series by donating funds. Each volume was bookplated so that could be clearly identified as available for free interlibrary loan. The receiving library was to make a commitment to catalogue fully the title onto the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN) or Online Computer Library Catalog (OCLC). A Task Force on Interlibrary Loan had also been formed to encourage common policies and improve resource sharing. The Task Force would report regularly in the *CEAL Bulletin*.

Further studies of the Task Force would include encouragement of "niche collection". Access to specific collections in Japan would be investigated.

Maureen Donovan, the energetic chairperson of CEAL, reported that the NCC had prepared a grant to set up a national network; five institutions would form the core. Information to be shared could consist of such items as tables of contents and commonly-asked reference questions. At Maureen's own university (Ohio), the largest in the United States, each student had their own email address. The initial network would be composed of a mix of libraries, some big, some medium and some small.

Maureen referred to staffing problems and the lack of language specialists in libraries. A sub-committee on training and recruitment had been set up to ascertain how to identify language specialists and provide library training for them.

Friday, 25 March 1994

At a CEAL meeting on Japanese materials, Mr Masatoshi Shibukawa, Chief Executive of Keio University, Meianet Library and Computer Information Services, spoke on "A new and old problem in U.S. - Japan library

cooperation". He referred to his paper at the IFLA meeting in Tokyo in 1986 on this topic. He said that little had happened by way of improvement to the situation. Interlibrary loan rates between the United States and Japan remained low, with ninety percent of all requests supplied by Japanese libraries for bio-medical journal articles. He hoped that the use of Internet, including its use for interlibrary loan, would be encouraged.

Dr Noriko Hio, International Committee of the Japan Database Industry Association (DINA) spoke about the supply of electronic information in Japan.

Saturday, 26th March, 1994

At a second CEAL session, Ms Wakato Nishibori, International Center for Japanese Cultural Studies, Kyoto, spoke of the Center's present and future.

Mr Yu Ji Ito (Overseas Business Planning and Development, Internal Affairs Department, Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation) spoke about "ELNET: the electronic library database system; its current status and future aims". ELNET provided online searching, SDI searches, copies of articles and machine translations. Forty five newspapers and 120 journals were indexed. Mr Ito said that access through Internet was feasible, as Internet was available in Japan in the commercial sector.

A comment was made to me that commercial firms were far more active than libraries in Japan in the supply of data.

Library of Congress Japan Documentation Center

An interesting presentation was given by Ms Ichiko Morita, the new head of the Japan Documentation Center at the Library of Congress (LC). She had three members of staff in Tokyo who were already acquiring hard-to-obtain reports from think-tanks, committees, and so on, on economic policy, trade, environment and other key issues. Documents would be scanned at LC and digitised in the CRS database. She hoped to provide access to the public at a later stage. She wanted to use Internet as fully as possible for the transmission of data, request, etc.

JICST

Mr Kenichi Iwazaki, Washington representative of JICST, briefly outlined their programs.

Sunday 27th March, 1994

Current trends in the East Asian Publishing Industry

Papers were presented on publishing in Japan, the People's Republic of China (PRC), Taiwan and South Korea. These papers will be published in the *CEAL Bulletin*. The papers were interesting outlines of the current situation. One notable news item was that copyright law was being put into place in PRC, Taiwan and Korea.

Libraries visited

During the Conference I visited the Harvard-Yenching Library on an excursion. I also paid a brief visit to the New York Public Library where I found their Innovative OPAC easy to use. Non-Roman script searches were carried out on an RLIN terminal, restricted to members of staff. It seemed to be a common pattern that staff had access to terminals with extra facilities.

Overall observations

1. **CJK Project:**
the US perception of the CJK Project as an innovative national approach was clear at the CEAL meetings. The combing of a number of libraries to solve what is still seen as a very complex problem has sparked interest.
2. **Use of CD-ROMs:**
It appears that CD-ROMs are now appearing as better sources of data for vernacular scripts because of the problems of handling scripts over the Internet and within Local Area and other networks.

The next meeting of the AAS will be held in Washington from April 6 to 9 1995, and in Hawaii from April 11 to 14 1996. An Australian panel at the 1996 conference would be worth considering.

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27 April, 1994