

6. EALGA'S RECOMMENTATIONS

The East Asian Librarians Group of Australia recommends that there is no need to set up a standard for classification of East Asian language materials on ABN and that the adoption of a classification scheme should leave the individual library to make its own decision. The following are excerpts from some correspondence between EALGA and the ABN Office about the matter :

6. a) Doreen Parker, Principal Librarian, Technical Services, University of Melbourne Library to the ABN Standards Committee, 2 February 1984.

It is proposed that the Harvard-Yenching Classification Scheme for Chinese and Japanese books be adopted as the standard for classification of East Asian materials on ABN with up-dating based on the Dewey decimal classification.

6. b) Diana B Dack, Secretary, ABN Standards Committees to S W Wang, Chairman, East Asian Librarians Group, 17 May 1984.

The attached paper was presented to the ABN Standards Committee at its meeting in March 1984. The impetus behind the proposal was consideration of setting up a separate classification field on ABN to hold the Harvard-Yenching classification number so that the number could be shared with other ABN participants using the same classification scheme.

I would be grateful if the East Asian Librarians group could advise the Committee on the current standardisation of the Harvard-Yenching scheme. To what extent do Australian libraries modify it for their own use, and is there an organisation which would be prepared to take responsibility for the update and maintainance of the scheme?

6. c) S W Wang to Diana B Dack, 24 May 1984

The Harvard-Yenching Scheme was developed by the Harvard-Yenching Library at Harvard University in 1943 and many libraries who adopted the scheme have since revised and extended the scheme to meet their own needs. So far no mechanism among the libraries using this scheme was set up for consultation. The Harvard-Yenching Library informed the National Library of Australia several years ago that it was considering revising the scheme.

At the Biennial Meeting of the East Asian Librarians' Group, we did discuss the proposed standard for classification of East Asian materials on ABN raised by Mrs. L H Hu of the University of Melbourne, and decided that I should write to the Harvard-Yenching Library and find out the present situation of their revision work of the scheme.

6. d) S W Wang to Diana B Dack, 30 August 1984

In answer to my letter, Dr Eugene Wu, Librarian, Harvard-Yenching Library, Harvard University, stated:

"Over the years all the libraries using the scheme (Harvard-Yenching Classification Scheme) had taken liberties in modifying its provisions in various ways in order to suit their own needs,..., for which wholesale changes in and additions to the numbers had been made. Most libraries felt that they had gone too far in their own way to take advantage of a revised edition as they would not be able or willing to go back and change the classification numbers already assigned. Faced with this prospect, we finally decided with a great deal of reluctance to abandon our original plans as it seemed to us unwise to pursue the project at a very high cost and produce a revised edition which would not be used by other Libraries".

The Executive Committee of the East Asian Librarians Group of Australia discussed the problem of adopting a standard for classification of East Asian language materials for ABN on 3 August 1984 and decided that the Group would not recommend ABN to adopt a standard for classification of East Asian language materials. The reasons given for this are as follows:

1. According to a recent survey conducted by the Group, among 23 libraries answering the survey, 11 were using Dewey Decimal Classification, 5 the L.C. Classification, 4 the Harvard-Yenching Classification Scheme for Chinese and Japanese Books, and 3 the Universal Decimal Classification. The Harvard-Yenching Classification Scheme has been adopted by the National Library of Australia, the Australian National University, the University of Sydney and the University of Melbourne and updated by them separately without consultation. The situation in Australia is not different from that in the United States as mentioned in Dr Wu's letter.

The Group considers that it is difficult to adopt a uniform classification scheme.

2. As ABN does not require a standard for classification of European language materials, the Group also thinks that there is no need to set up a standard for classification of East Asian language materials and that the matter should leave the individual library to make its own decision.