

## NCC in 3D: CEAL AND THE NCC COMPARED<sup>1</sup>

Kristina K. Troost

Duke University

This paper compares the Council on East Asian Libraries (CEAL) and the North American Coordinating Council on Japanese Library Resources (NCC) in 3D – synchronically and diachronically. Originally written as part of the planning for the NCC's 3D (third decade) conference planned for March 2010, it examines the origins and current foci of both organizations. Both CEAL and the NCC arose in response to increases in the demand for library resources triggered by a dramatic expansion in faculty and programs. Both times faculty were engaged in their creation, and foundations provided some of the financial support for their activities. As of 2009, however, they have carved out different niches. This paper will examine the differences between CEAL<sup>2</sup> and the NCC in mission and structure, and assess the implications these differences have for the future of the NCC.

The Council on East Asian Libraries is the fourth institutional expression of an idea conceived in June 1948 when, at a meeting of the American Library Association, a group of people interested in "Far Eastern" libraries met to discuss problems of mutual interest and to form a committee, originally named the National Committee on Oriental Collections in the U.S.A. and Abroad.<sup>3</sup> The first issue addressed was cataloging; as Eugene Wu notes, "there were no national standards for cataloging Chinese, Japanese or Korean material. Every library was on its own . . . there was even disagreement as to whether the main entry should be by author or title."<sup>4</sup>

While librarians dealt with the cataloging issues, in the late 50s and 60s, faculty and librarians were concerned by the challenge of acquiring materials, particularly books published in China or needed for new collections. CALFRE (Committee on American Library Resources on the Far East, CEAL's immediate predecessor) and AAS worked together to address this by establishing institutions to get books from China and Taiwan; funding for these new organizations came from the American Council of Learned Societies and the Council on Library Resources.<sup>5</sup>

Similar forces drove the founding of the NCC. It was a joint effort of faculty and librarians to address the challenges posed by expanded needs for information, triggered by dramatic increases in the number of Japanese Studies programs and the variety of fields that needed support. Yet while CEAL and the NCC were both begun in response to structural problems, the causes were different. In the 1950s and 1960s, East Asian libraries had faced structural difficulties in getting materials from China and Taiwan, but in the

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was originally presented at the annual meeting of the NCC in Chicago, March 2009. It draws on my experience as a member of CEAL from 1991, as President of CEAL from 2008-2010, and as the Chair of the NCC from 1998-2000.

<sup>2</sup> For the history of CEAL, I am particularly indebted to two articles by Eugene Wu, "Organizing for East Asian Studies in the United States: The Origins of the Council on East Asian Libraries, Association for Asian Studies," *JEAL*, no. 110 (Oct. 1996), pp. 1-14; and Eugene Wu, "CEAL at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century," *JEAL*, no.121 (June 2000), pp. 1-12. For an earlier account, see Edwin G. Beal, Jr. "The Committee on East Asian Libraries: A Brief History," Appendix I, *Newsletter* (Association for Asian Studies, Inc., Committee on East Asian Libraries) 41 (Sept. 1973), pp. 42-50.

<sup>3</sup> Beal, pp. 42-

<sup>4</sup> Wu, 2000, p. 3

<sup>5</sup> Wu, 2000, p. 5-6. Later the ACLS and the SSRC funded a study of acquisitions from China, and the Center for Chinese Research Materials was established under the auspices of ARL with grants from the Ford Foundation, the Andrew Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

late 1980s, the structural problem was that the ability of outside funders, the Japan Foundation and the Japan United States Friendship Commission, to provide that support was diminishing at the same time that more libraries were seeking support.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the types of libraries and faculty who needed materials had changed. When CEAL and AAS had confronted the expansion of demands for access to information in the 1960s, they had faced the challenge of helping major research universities build collections. By comparison, the rapid expansion of Japanese Studies in the late 80s and early 90s went beyond research universities and their libraries; the Japan Foundation's study published in 1996 notes that Japanese Studies programs had proliferated.<sup>7</sup> There was a need to support Japanese studies specialists wherever they were.

Just as surveys had been made in the 1950s and 60s to assess the scope of the problem and identify possible solutions, the Japan Foundation and the JUSFC undertook a number of studies and held conferences to develop a plan for a new committee to address the needs for access to information about Japan.<sup>8</sup> A conference of faculty and librarians in June 1991 recommended the formation of a committee which "would have to relate to CEAL but do more than CEAL; it must work exclusively on Japanese materials. It must be multi-sponsored and have funding to be organized permanently in order to have clout. It must include librarians from all tiers, as well as LOC (Library of Congress)" and "end users must be on it."<sup>9</sup>

The initial goals for the organization were to: "1) work with faculty and librarians in the field; 2) work directly with funders; 3) help coordinate ongoing efforts at improving access to Japanese materials for faculty and students in Japanese studies throughout the country; 4) develop strategies for resource sharing; and 5) establish means for cooperative collection development on a national level."<sup>10</sup>

When one compares these goals with CEAL's objectives as stated in the bylaws, there is considerable overlap. CEAL's objectives are: (a) to serve as a faculty-librarians' forum for the discussion of East Asian library issues of common concern; (b) to formulate programs for the development of East Asian library resources, bibliographic controls, and access; and (c) to improve and enhance interlibrary and international cooperation in East Asian library development and services.<sup>11</sup>

The most explicit difference is the connection between the NCC and the funders, the Japan Foundation and the Japan United States Friendship Commission. In contrast to CEAL, not only were the funders involved in its conception, but they have also remained actively involved. And rather than establishing new centers to publish and acquire materials, the funding was used to create an organization to respond to changes in information needs. Rather than providing information, the NCC has facilitated access to information by

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<sup>6</sup> See Committee Activities: III. Report of the Subcommittee on Japanese Materials. *CEAL Bulletin*, no. 93, 1991, pp. 33ff. Dr. Gangloff said, "In the meantime, conditions affecting the libraries changed considerably. For example, the cost of books increased, the purchasing power of the dollar declined, technology advanced and the number of applications of the new technology for accessing existing collections increased. In 1990, the Commission was faced with grave financial problems in funding. Consequently, the Commission reviewed the situation and made an initial decision to shift from support for direct acquisitions to support for resource sharing in applications of technology."

<sup>7</sup> "The number of institutions with a Japan specialist in 1995 [was] larger than the total number of Japan specialists in 1970!" Quoted from *Japanese Studies in the United States: The 1990s* (Japanese studies Series XXVI), the Japan Foundation, 1996, p. 49, in Victoria Lyon Bestor, "The Founding of the NCC," NCC Council Handbook, Section 1, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Victoria Lyon Bestor, "The Founding of the NCC," NCC Council Handbook, Section 1, pp. 1-4.

<sup>9</sup> Cited by Bestor, p.2.

<sup>10</sup> Bestor, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted from current bylaws but the wording dates back to the 1980 revision of the bylaws which changed the second objective from "for the improvement of library facilities" to the current focus on resources and access.

teaching people how to find it, enhancing holdings in the U.S. while reducing duplication, and improving access through interlibrary loan and digital licensing.<sup>12</sup>

There are other differences; the NCC explicitly must include librarians from all tiers, while CEAL was for a long time dominated by librarians from the large collections. More importantly, the NCC has been focused on defining user needs and developing programs to meet those needs. At the time the NCC was founded, CEAL did not have a Public Services Committee, and user needs were assumed to be understood rather than solicited. Even more importantly, by contrast with CEAL's focus on its membership of East Asian librarians, the NCC's focus has been on faculty and students *throughout the country*, including those without a library or easy access to a library collection. The focus on "means" plus stable leadership has led to programmatic implementation, on building the institutions to enable cooperative collection development over the long term.

To approach these differences systematically:

1. **Funding:** Reliable and ongoing funding is the most significant difference between the NCC and CEAL; in particular, the funding for an executive director provided by the Japan United States Friendship Commission has allowed the NCC to achieve many things: 1) the multi-volume set project; 2) numerous training workshops for librarians and faculty alike; 3) negotiations with Japan on topics such as interlibrary loan, image protocols and digital resources; 4) the implementation of the GIF project. The executive director provides project management, office support, organizational management and public relations. He/she writes grant proposals, gathers information, coordinates the activities of the NCC and its committees and in general, provides both the day-to-day support and the broad vision that has enabled the NCC to implement its ideas. The focus has been on flexible infrastructure support that can adjust to changing needs. While, as in CEAL and AAS, faculty and librarians donate their time, such time is finite because all have full-time obligations and serve for three-year terms. An executive director allows the NCC to accomplish more, faster than it would without one, and has meant that it has continued to develop new programs and undertake new initiatives while continuing the best old ones. Additionally the support from the Commission and, until recently the Japan Foundation, for two regular meetings of the NCC have allowed the NCC to do more, faster simply because it met twice a year rather than once a year. The amount that the NCC has accomplished since 1991 is remarkable, and is due in large part to the support provided by the funders for its activities, in particular, for an executive director and biannual meetings of the council.
2. **Foundation support:** The Japan Foundation and the Friendship Commission have provided not only financial support but also connections, credibility and official standing. The Japan Foundation's ties to the NCC have opened doors in Japan, and the NCC's ties to the JUSFC and its sister organization CULCON were of great benefit in the establishment of the Global ILL Framework and continues to facilitate work with Japanese organizations.
3. **National/International Focus:** Another aspect of foundation support has been the focus on building national collections rather than local ones. This was seen in the revisions to the Japan Foundation guidelines in 1991 and in the guidelines for the MVS project, which is funded by the Commission. As a result, there has been less duplication of titles throughout the United States, while ensuring the availability of expensive research materials not easily obtainable from Japan. The NCC provides a structure; librarians and faculty do the work, and the Commission makes it possible.
4. **Faculty involvement:** While CEAL was originally a faculty- librarian's forum, faculty have not been active participants in CEAL for over two decades.<sup>13</sup> The NCC bylaws and history make

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<sup>12</sup> This difference is due, at least in part, to changes in the environment in which libraries operate. While in the 1950s and 1960s, there was no shared online bibliographic database to facilitate interlibrary loan nor was interlibrary loan as efficient as it presently is--both of these factors promoted duplication--the NCC is increasingly operating in a digital world where information is widely shared and interlibrary loan is easy.

clear the important role faculty (and other end users) are to play: "The membership shall represent insofar as possible library and user interests, including representatives from currently functioning organizations concerned with library and scholarly issues in Japanese studies, and librarians and scholars from major, as well as from second and/or third tier, academic institutions."<sup>14</sup> This active involvement of faculty has led directly to a number of initiatives, including access to NACSIS before there was NACSIS webcat, online reference (AskeASL), ILL in the U.S. and with Japan, the Image Use Protocol Task Force, and even the creation of CEAL's public services committee. The MVS project, with its requirements for free ILL, letters of support from faculty and for publicity show a commitment to the involvement of end-users. Early efforts to expand recon and current efforts at training have involved both faculty and librarians. As Sachie Noguchi notes in her article on faculty involvement in the NCC, faculty "involvement has been vital for the NCC activities. . . librarians received a different kind of input from faculty while librarians educated faculty about library functions and issues that they have not previously understood."<sup>15</sup>

5. **Membership:** The NCC includes one representative from Japan, who has served as the official liaison between the NCC and the library community in Japan, as well as representatives from the Library of Congress and ARL. By comparison, while members of LC have been active in CEAL, and have occasionally served on various committees, this practice has not been institutionalized, unlike the NCC bylaws which require such participation.<sup>16</sup> The official roles of these members as representatives of various organizations has made it possible for NCC projects to be national in scope and application. For example, because the charge for the Japanese representative is as liaison to the library community in Japan, s/he has played an important role between the NCC and various organizations, whether in establishing the GIF project or in the current Image Use Protocol task force. The NCC also benefited in the past from ARL support on a number of initiatives, most particularly the ILL initiatives. ARL garnered the support of library directors and ensured the participation of interlibrary loan departments in the U.S.; it also facilitated the discussions with OCLC on the adoption of the ISO protocol for interlibrary loan, without which electronic communication between OCLC and NACSIS and payment through IFM would not have been possible.<sup>17</sup> These initiatives took national leadership and cooperation, and the connection with various national organizations (ARL, ANUL, NII, NDL) was invaluable.

## 6. Areas of overlap: Similarities and differences

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<sup>13</sup> The last faculty to serve on CEAL were Vivienne Shue who represented CIAC and Chae-Jin Lee who was appointed as an at-large representative. At the end of their terms, Vivienne wrote a letter to the then Chair, Karl Lo, suggesting that there was no need for faculty representation as "*the flow of business between the two bodies*" was very small, [emphasis added] and that "other area councils do not necessarily maintain representatives on the CEAL executive committee." She continues that "...the two committees should approach each other freely and directly for consultation, advice and coordination on and any all issues of mutual concern, as the need arose." 31 July 1986.

<sup>14</sup> Bylaws of the North American Coordinating Council on Japanese Library Resources, last revised January 16, 2009. <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~ncc/bylaws.html>. Accessed March 16, 2009.

<sup>15</sup> "Faculty involvement in the North American Coordinating Council on Japanese Library Resources (NCC): The Background," *Journal of East Asian Libraries*, 124 (June 2001), p. 25.

<sup>16</sup> "...including at least three from major national associations with an interest in Japanese information, identified by the Council as a whole, and originally including the American Advisory Committee (AAC) to the Japan Foundation, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), the Council on East Asian Libraries (CEAL), the Northeast Asia Council (NEAC) of the Association for Asian Studies, and the Library of Congress, but not limited to those organizations." <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~ncc/bylaws.html#membership>. Accessed March 16, 2009.

<sup>17</sup> This project also benefited from the NCC's ties to the JUSFC. The JUSFC is also the US Secretariat for CULCON, the US-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange. In the past, the NCC has assisted CULCON with working groups, especially the CULCON Information Access Working Group which has completed its work. The NCC's Global ILL Framework is an important bi-national collaborative project that grew directly from work through CULCON.

- a. **Training.** For the past two decades, the NCC has assumed responsibility for training Japanese Studies librarians and faculty. As is still the case for the Chinese and Korean Materials Committees, training of junior librarians was once done by CEAL's Japanese materials committee. The difference between CEAL and NCC training initiatives, as I see it, has been partly one of quantity but more importantly of focus - the NCC has required that all participants conduct workshops for faculty, not just at their own institution but regionally or nationally. The focus has been a national one, targeted to the end user, not just the librarian.
- b. **Digital Resources/Working with Publishers and Vendors.** The presence of the NCC has led to a more systematic and national approach to these issues. A comparison with Chinese and Korean Studies illustrates the benefits of one voice supported by national foundations: Korean collections have the Korean Collections Consortium, which is supported by the Korea Foundation and modeled after the NCC; the KCC has negotiated pricing for Korean databases that benefit any library interested in subscribing. Chinese collections do not have a national organization, and each library or consortium must cut its own deal.
- c. **Programmatic Planning.** CEAL operates on the basis of three year terms, and most planning is done on those cycles. This allows considerable autonomy to each chair, but assessment and long-term planning are often overlooked. By comparison the NCC had a conference in 2000 that looked both back<sup>18</sup> and forward. Its goal was to identify new directions for the NCC, and it is currently planning a conference for 2010, called the 3-D or Third decade conference.

In sum, while the objectives of CEAL and the NCC have considerable overlap, there are significant differences. While both organizations foster cooperation, for the NCC it is more than just cooperation. The NCC is predicated on the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts; the synergy gained from cooperation allows the NCC to do more than any institution can do alone, and its activities have a national goal rather than a local one.

Over time, the NCC's focus has changed from collection building to infrastructure support, and from training librarians to creating programs for faculty and students that open the door to Japanese information, but the common thread has been the development and implementation of projects *based on user needs*, such as collaborations with vendors of digital resources and the owners of rights to visual images for teaching, research and publication. Its charge is to be pro-active, to identify needs in the scholarly community and develop strategies to address them. Its official role as spokesman for North American Japanese collections, the continuity of its leadership, faculty participation, and the ongoing support provided by the Japan United States Friendship Commission are central to its ability to achieve its goals and are what differentiate it from CEAL.

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<sup>18</sup> Kristina Kade Troost, "From Hoover to 2000: An Assessment." Paper delivered at the Year 2000 Conference, San Diego, March 6-7, 2000.