Report of LEAF-VN Related Activities
January/April 2010 Vietnam Visit

by
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This report outlines my LEAF-VN related activities during my most recent visit to Vietnam. After my retirement (in February 2007) from the Library of Congress as Chief of the Cataloging in Publication Division, Ms. Liên Hương Fiedler, President of Library Education Assistance Foundation for Vietnam, invited me to join the LEAF Board of Directors. Since then I have visited Vietnam three times. During my first trip, (from November 15, 2007 to March 21, 2008), I had the opportunity to visit a number of academic and public libraries in both north and south Vietnam as well as to conduct workshops on the Cataloging in Publication program at the National Library, the University of Saigon and the Learning Resource Center at Cần Thơ University. During my second visit (December 9, 2008 to March 15, 2009), I had the opportunity to join Liên Hương Fiedler in meetings with the General Sciences Library-Hồ Chí Minh City and UNESCO management to explore possible synergies among the represented organizations. I also had the opportunity to attend the International Conference on the Standardization of Library & Information Science Education at Saigon University as well as to visit several libraries including the Saigon Giải Phóng Newspaper Library. During my most recent visit (January 9, 2010 to April4, 2010), I joined fellow board member Ms Lệ-Hương Phạm in a meeting at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Saigon University, and presented again a revised version of the CIP presentation, which I had done to the staff of the Library Resources Center at Cần Thơ University. This report concerns my 2010 visit.

Preparatory Activities.

Prior to my January 9, 2010 departure to Vietnam, I participated in a number of activities in support of LEAF's commitment to provide educational and technical support to the libraries of Vietnam.

This included obtaining resources identified by fellow board members, Ms Lệ-Hương Phạm and Mr. Lâm Vĩnh-Thế, required to develop the training program on the Library of Congress Subject Headings System. Of principal importance was the subscription to the online version of Classification Web. Lệ-Hương provided "live" demonstrations of this important cataloging tool when she conducted the 3-day training program both in Hà Nội, from November 25 to November 27, 2009 and Hồ Chí Minh City from December 8 to December 12, 2009. Also in support of the training program I obtained several other technical documents including: *Free-Floating Subdivisions: An Alphabetic Index* (21st edition) and *Library of Congress Subject Headings: Supplementary Vocabularies.*

Also prior to my departure I obtained three sets of the 21st edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification system. This effort was initiated by an email request received from Ms. Lê Thị Thanh Xuân, Vice Director of the Library and Information Center, University of Đà Lạt. In her request, Ms. Xuân asked if it would be possible to obtain a copy of the ink-print version of the 22nd edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification schedule. I discussed this request with Liên Hương Fiedler, who noted that given the significant cost of DDC22 and other LEAF-VN commitments under way (such as the LCSH training program), LEAF's budget could not support this purchase.

As an option, however, Liên Hương made inquiries within the Library of Congress to see if there may be extra copies of either DDC 22 or DDC21 available. While there are, of course, differences between DDC21 and DDC22, these are mainly in the areas of computer sciences where new subjects have been added and in other areas like religion (to reduce Christian bias), social sciences (to eliminate some redundancies), etc., but no schedule has been fundamentally revised or reordered. The major portion of DDC 21 remains accurate and relevant for most subject areas. Unfortunately, there were no copies of DDC 22 or DDC 21 available from LC.

Nonetheless, we thought there might be copies of DDC21 available among the broader U.S. library community. Now that DDC22 was available, some libraries that obtained DDC22 may no longer need their copy of DDC21 and might be willing to sell it at a cost significantly lower than the cost of DDC22. Following up on this idea, I sent a request to the U.S. public library community and, over a period of several weeks, had the good fortune to obtain three copies of DDC21 free of charge which I then shipped to Vietnam to the following libraries:

One set was sent to University of Đà Lạt compliments of Mari Bruni, Director, Huntington Memorial Library, Oneonta, New York.

One set was sent to the General Sciences Library in Hồ Chí Minh City, compliments of Susan H. Burton, Library Director, Portsmouth Public Library, Portsmouth, Virginia.

And one set was sent to the National University of Vietnam–Hồ Chí Minh City, compliments of Mary Hougland, Director, Jennings County Public Library, North Vernon, Indiana.

Also, prior to my departure for Vietnam I met with Liên Hương Fiedler regarding a copy of the ink-print version of the 31st edition (2009) Library of Congress Subject Headings which she obtained from Mr. Thompson A. Yee, Assistant Director of the Library of Congress Cataloging Policy and Support Office. This LCSH set was LEAF-VN's gift for the Graduate School of Library and Information Science in Hà Nội. This six volume set, however, is very heavy and therefore expensive to ship to Vietnam. But, as I generally travel light, I volunteered to take this set of LCSH with me as part of my checked luggage. When I arrived in HCMC, Lệ-Hương Phạm picked it up at my hotel and then made arrangements to have it delivered to Mr. Đồng Đức Hùng, Lecturer of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science in Hà Nội.

Visit to the School of Library and Information Science, Sai Gon University.

On the January 19, 2010, Lệ-Hương Phạm and I were invited to meet with
Dr. Nguyễn Văn Bằng, Dean of the School of Library and Information Science, Sai Gon University, and other officers and faculty members. During our visit we also had the opportunity to meet the President and Vice President of the university and to hear reports about a number of the school's achievements.

Dr. Nguyễn Văn Bằng also kindly provided Lệ Hương and me a tour of the school facilities including the School of Library and Information Science, the media room, and the electronic resources area.

During our visit Lệ-Hương and I presented the school a number of technical library publications including:

- *Free-Floating Subdivisions: An Alphabetic Index (21st edition)*

- LC Subject Headings: Supplementary Vocabularies.
- Library of Congress Subject Headings: Principles and Application. 4th ed. / Lois Mai Chan.
- Library of Congress Subject Headings: Principles of Structures and Policies for Application. Annotated version. / Lois Mai Chan, Cataloging Distribution Service, Library of Congress, 1990.
- Subject Headings Manual. Library of Congress, Cataloging Policy and Support Service, 2008- (Loose-leaf)

[Picture taken at Sai Gon University – Faculty of Library and Information Science: Lệ Hương Phạm, John Celli and Saigon University Faculty members]

Librarians Dinner.

On January 16th I attended a dinner hosted by Lệ-Hương Phạm which included about a dozen librarians from nearby libraries such as the Saigon University, Vietnam National University—HCM Central Library, and the General Sciences Library-HCM City.

The dinner was a delight and included a number of very delicious dishes including spring rolls, shrimp, carp, soup, and a very special periwinkles dish. This is a very complicated and time-consuming appetizer to prepare as the very tiny periwinkles must be extracted from the shell, cleaned very carefully mixed with pork and spices, then stuffed back into the periwinkle shell with a strip of "lá gừng" (ginger

leaf) around it so it can be easily pulled out and eaten. It is steamed and eaten with "nước mắm mixed with ginger." A real treat!

[Dinner picture at Lệ Hương's Party]

The dishes were all enjoyable as well as the companionship and conversation which gave me an opportunity to visit with librarians that I had met on my earlier visits and to discuss a number of library issues. Lệ-Hương noted, interestingly enough, that the challenges inherent in establishing the form of entry for Vietnamese names is exacerbated by the conflicting guidance provide by the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules on one hand and the MARC format on the other. As Lệ-Hương noted, the Anglo American Cataloging Rules puts a comma after the first element in a Vietnamese name thereby distinguishing the family name. But according to *Tài liệu hướng dẫn sử dụng Khổ mẫu thư mục rút gọn MARC 21 Việt Nam" [Vietnamese MARC Handbook]* / by Vũ Văn Sơn and Cao Minh Kiểm (http://www.thuvienbinhdinh.com/MARCVN/f1xx.htm) the Vietnamese family name is written as the first element of the full name and without a comma. Therefore it is considered as forename. This, of course, can only cause confusion for catalogers not to speak of researchers and readers doing online name searchers. Cataloging is a complex business. This was a further reminder to me of just how much more complicated cataloging can be for Vietnamese catalogers.

[Picture taken at Lệ Hương's party]

Visit to Vietnam National University-HCM Central Library

On February 25, 2010 I visited the Vietnam National University-HCM Central Library at the invitation of the Director, Hoàng Thị Thục. I toured the library and found it to be as impressive as when I last had occasion to visit. I also met with Technical Services staff and discussed a number of cataloging issues related to subject cataloging as well as various online and print resources including Classification Web. Subject cataloging is complex and all the more so for Vietnamese catalogers who frequently access in English language subject headings from the Library of Congress or other libraries but then must convert them to Vietnamese.

We also discussed the Library of Congress Subject Heading authority file which at that time had been recently made available at the following web site: http://id.loc.gov/authorities. This is an excellent resource for catalogers, and it is free of charge.

I also presented the following technical cataloging documents:

- *Free-Floating Subdivisions: An Alphabetic Index, 21st edition. Library of Congress*
- *LC Subject Headings: Supplementary Vocabularies, Library of Congress, 2009*
- *Understanding MARC Authority Records, Library of Congress, 2004*
- *Understanding MARC Bibliographic Records, Library of Congress, 2003*

General Sciences Library, Hồ Chí Minh City.

As I have a library card for the General Sciences Library (GSL), I occasionally used the GSL main reading room for my own writing projects and language study. GSL's reading room provides free internet access and a cool and quiet environment, a virtual oasis in the midst of the heat and traffic noise of HCMC streets. On these occasions, I had the opportunity to have coffee with GSL staff including the Deputy Librarian Dương Thị Hoàng Thư and discuss a range of library issues such as Copyright, ISBN, CIP, and subject authority control. Ms Thư noted that GSL was striving to develop a print version of a Vietnamese subject authority list which would be, to the best of my knowledge, the first such Vietnamese subject authority file. Subsequent to these conversations, I understand that GSL has made progress on this project. While the publication is likely to be a modest first effort, it nonetheless represents a significant accomplishment. From my own perspective, having been involved with the development of scores of bibliographic products (when working for the Library of Congress Cataloging Distribution Service), I think one of the most difficult things in developing a product of this kind is to overcome the inertia and complexity that invariably obstruct initial production. That's not easy, but once there is a base product available then that product can serve either as an instructive beta version to be redesigned or, more likely, the first iteration to be corrected, modified, and enhanced by succeeding iterations.

During these meetings I also presented Ms Thư the following technical cataloging documents:

- *Free-Floating Subdivisions: An Alphabetic Index, 21st edition. Library of Congress*
- *LC Subject Headings: Supplementary Vocabularies, Library of Congress, 2009*
- *Understanding MARC Authority Records, Library of Congress, 2004*

- Understanding MARC Bibliographic Records, Library of Congress, 2003

I should also note that I had originally shipped some of these books via the U.S. Postal Service to my hotel, naively thinking that this would be a relatively easy way to bring a few extra books to Vietnam. This, in fact, turned out to be a fairly time consuming process as the VN postal service can be rather bureaucratic. GSL staff, however, kindly assisted me in obtaining the books so I could distribute them as noted in this report.

CIP Presentation at Cần Thơ University Learning Resource Center.

On March 2nd and 3rd, I did a presentation on the CIP Program and ISBN for the library staff of the Learning Resource Center at Cần Thơ University. This presentation resulted from earlier emails with Mrs Huỳnh Thị Trang, Director of the Learning Resource Center, who asked if I would be willing to do a repeat of the presentation I did in 2008 with the exception of the module on ISBN which I did not present in 2008.

The March 2nd session began at 9:00 and ran until 11:30. This session provided an overview of the Cataloging in Publication program including the purpose and value of the program as well as a detailed discussion of the work flow and the many issues associated with cataloging works in advance of their publication.

At 11:30 Ms Trang invited me to attend a celebration of Japanese culture which, coincidentally, was occurring that afternoon on the plaza of the Learning Resource Center. The celebration included remarks from the Japanese ambassador to Vietnam, a student contest abut Japanese culture, and a demonstration of how to prepare teriyaki, complete with samples for the audience.

The afternoon session of the CIP presentation went from 1:30 to 4:30 and included a demonstration of the Library of Congress Electronic CIP system with a detailed discussion of the online application used by publishers to prepare and submit CIP applications, the Traffic Manager system used by LC technicians and catalogers for managing, reviewing and processing CIP application, and On the MARC, a unique application that literally automates many aspects of the descriptive cataloging process.

The March 3rd session began at 9:00 and concluded at 11:30. This session presented and overview of the ISBN program and included discussion of the

importance of ISBNs, their use, and the systems required for implementing and maintaining an ISBN program. This was followed by an open discussion of the limitations of the LC CIP program and speculation on the merits of a hypothetical system that combined functionality for supporting both the CIP and ISBN programs.

The two day presentation included approximately twelve LRC staff as well as several teachers who sat in on parts of the program. The program was especially satisfying to participate in as the level of staff interest was consistently high and the nature of the discussions and questions always thoughtful and intelligent.

For my own part, I went away with a much better understanding of the challenges of establishing a CIP program in Vietnam. Chief among them is the issue of copyright. Publishers are very reluctant to submit manuscripts or galleys of forthcoming titles as they fear that the manuscripts may be pirated. LC encountered these same fears when we initiated the ECIP program, but after about one year, and the adoption of a slow but steady approach, we overcame that fear. There has, in fact, never been an issue of copyright infringement associated with LC's CIP program.

But in the course of discussion with Learning Resource Center staff, it became clear to me that the environment in which LC developed and implemented the ECIP program is very different from that of Vietnam's. Copyright infringement is rampant in Vietnam. "Knock offs" of designer products are widely available at cut rate prices. Photocopy shops routinely copy the full content of books. And, in fact, libraries allow students to copy significant portions of books.

Libraries, understandably, are sympathetic to the needs of students who have very little money and can seldom afford to pay the full price of books. Nonetheless, this policy is not without consequences. Vietnamese publishers are wary of participating in any program that will further jeopardize their industry. This is an important issue. Disregard for copyright not only jeopardizes the development of Vietnam's publishing industry and compensation of writers and scholars, but, most importantly, it stifles the efflorescence of Vietnam's culture which springs from the imagination, research, creativity, scholarship of the writers, poets, musicians, artists, and scholars.

[Picture from the CIP Workshop at Cần Thơ University]

Book Festival.

The 2010 HCMC Book Festival took place from March 15 to March 21 which provided me the opportunity to attend twice. The festival took up an entire Lê Văn Tám Park that is bounded by Võ Thị Sáu, Hai Bà Trưng and Điện Biên Phủ streets. Literally hundreds of publishers were represented including many international houses such as Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, John Wiley, Elsevier, Springer, Random Hoses, and many more. I have attended hundreds of such events, but this was a special pleasure as it was held outside in a park, unlike most events of this kind that are held inside large auditoriums, and it included a wide spectrum of visitors, young and old, families and children, complete with ice cream, balloons, and little outdoor cafes. Unlike the American Library Association book exhibits, which are mainly attended by librarians, the HCMC Book Festival was not limited to a special segment of society. It was very festive with lots of events for both children and adults, including a demonstration of calligraphy and other crafts as well as presentations by authors and interesting personalities like Eran Katz, a Guinness Book of Records holder, who is distinguished for memorizing the longest string of numbers. He has the uncanny ability to recite 500 numbers after hearing them once.

[Picture taken at the book Festival at Lê Văn Tám Park, HCMC]

UNESCO.

During my stay in Vietnam, I took Vietnamese language classes at the UNESCO's HCMC office as I did last year. As a consequence of that association, Liên Hương Fiedler, the President of LEAF, and I met last year with Nguyễn Thị Mỹ Hạnh, the Director of the Saigon office for UNESCO's Cultural Exchange Program. This was essentially an exploratory meeting to see if there might be some UNESCO LEAF synergies in which the two organizations may be of mutual help to one another. The meeting included discussions of LEAF's village library project and UNESCO concerns with providing educational programs and support for rural village. Ms Hạnh, however, appears to be no longer at that office so I am unable to report on any current UNESCO program efforts that may be of interest to LEAF.

I did, however, have occasion to meet with the program officer, Mr. Nguyễn Đình Vũ, who asked me to teach an English writing course and/or an English speaking course to advanced students. At Mr Vũ's invitation I also sat in on an English language course taught by a UNESCO instructor one evening at the University of Technology. The students were very enthusiastic and the class was a very enjoyable experience. Subsequent to my return to the U.S., I have, in fact, spent some time developing a writing course (though I still have a good deal more work to do if I am to conduct even a modest English writing course). In any event, I have not at this date made any commitment to teach for UNESCO. But I will very likely continue my own Vietnamese language study at the UNESCO office when I return to Vietnam and will make a decision at that time as to whether or not to teach a writing or English as a second language course.