

Organizations for Area Studies Librarians in the United States: Relationships Between the Bodies and the Counterpart Organizations for Scholars

For a presentation on March 16, 2005 at the
Research Institute of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

By James Nye
Bibliographer for Southern Asia and
Director, South Asia Language and Area Center, University of Chicago

Background information

There is no single organization in the United States with responsibilities for area studies libraries and librarians. Instead, librarians generally organize themselves according to world region. The organizations of regional librarians often affiliate with larger national organizations of librarians and libraries as well as with scholarly organizations. Further, the area library organizations frequently engage in projects for mutual the benefit of their institutions and the scholars they support.

Similarly, there is no single organization responsible for area studies scholars and scholarship. Instead, scholars affiliate with organizations that are regional (for example, the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies), sub-regional (for example, the Maharashtra Studies Group), and super-regional (for example, the Association for Asian Studies, which encompasses the East Asian, Southeast Asian, and South Asian regions). Further, most scholars are members of organizations focused on their discipline, for instance, the American Political Science Association, the American Historical Association, and the American Academy of Religion. In addition, there are organizations that represent the broad interests of scholars in super-disciplinary configurations, for instance, the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council. For a more general statement on area studies, please see David Szanton's recent publication titled *The Origin, Nature, and Challenges of Area Studies in the United States* which is available as full text at <http://repositories.cdlib.org/uciaspubs/editedvolumes/3/1/>.

This lack of clearly structured hierarchy for library and scholarly organizations may appear chaotic. It is often difficult to understand how the units relate to one another. The following chart is an attempt to show the relationship of library organizations for South Asian studies with the larger scholarly organizations. While I am most familiar with South Asian studies, I have also included references to some key organizations for area studies libraries related to Southeast Asian studies, East Asian studies, and Slavic studies.

Organizations and projects for U.S. librarians and libraries involved in South Asian studies

Organizations

Committee on South Asian Libraries and Documentation <<http://www.lib.virginia.edu/area-studies/SouthAsia/Lib/consald.html>>

Center for South Asia Libraries <<http://dsal.uchicago.edu/csal/>>

Global Resources Network <<http://www.crl.edu/content.asp?l1=4&l2=55>> and
<<http://www.arl.org/collect/grp/>>

Projects

South Asia Microform Project <<http://www.crl.edu/areastudies/SAMP/index.htm>> at the
Center for Research Libraries

Technological Innovation and Cooperation for Foreign Information Access
<<http://www.crl.edu/areastudies/ticfia/>>

Parent and Supporting Organizations

Association for Asian Studies <<http://www.aasianst.org/>>

Center for Research Libraries <<http://www.crl.edu/>>

Association of Research Libraries <<http://www.arl.org/>>

Association of American Universities <<http://www.aau.edu/>>

Digital Library Federation <<http://www.diglib.org/>>

Venues for Meetings

Association for Asian Studies <<http://www.aasianst.org/>>

Conference on South Asia <<http://wiscweb3.wisc.edu/southasiaconference/>>

Noteworthy U.S. library organizations for a few other world regions

Southeast Asian studies

Committee on Research Materials on Southeast Asia <<http://cormosea.org/>>

Southeast Asia Microform Project <<http://www.crl.edu/areastudies/SEAM/index.htm>> at
the Center for Research Libraries

East Asian Studies

Council on East Asian Libraries <<http://www.sois.uwm.edu/jeong/ceal/>>

[There is no microforms project for East Asia at the Center for Research Libraries.]

Slavic studies

Bibliography and Documentation Committee

<<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~aaass/2004%20AAASS%20committees>> of the
American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies

<<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~aaass/>>

Slavic and East European Microform Project

<<http://www.crl.edu/areastudies/SEEMP/index.htm>> at the Center for Research
Libraries