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A brief report on the New Classification Scheme for Chinese Libraries

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Introduction

In this report, I will be taking a brief look into Lai Yung-Hsiang's New Classification Scheme for Chinese Libraries (LAI). I will start by giving a short account of its history and context followed by its current status and use, as well as a description of its basic principles. In particular, I would like to compare it with Liu Guojun's classification for Chinese libraries (LIU), which it is updated from, and the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) scheme, which they have both been based on. This report will conclude with a brief analysis of its strengths, weaknesses and challenges for its future.

A brief history through Chinese library classification

With regards to the history of Chinese books, William Sheh Wong (1977, p.41-51) and Yunyan Zheng (2014, p.265-266) have written fascinating summaries which readers should refer to. Likewise, for the history of Chinese libraries (Wong, 1977, p.51-59; and Zheng, 2014) and again for an introduction on traditional Chinese classification schemes (Wong, 1977, p.109-113; also Lin, 1998, p.144). The foundations of the classification applied to what is considered to be the first Chinese library catalogue is discussed in a papers by Hur-Li Lee (2012, also Lee and Lan, 2009).

I will however mention the fourfold system, which has certain relevance as we shall see. Other classifications were also developed throughout the history of China, but their influence were generally limited (Zheng, 2003, p.3).

Collections using the fourfold system were divided into categories based on the Confucian school of thought (Zhang, 2003, p.3). These four main classes are classics, history (which includes geography), philosophy and literature works (Wong, 1977, p.110 and Zheng, 2014, p.264-265). Documents on

military science, medicine and technology were all grouped under philosophy (Wong, 1977, p.110). History was separated from the classics, which candidates were tested on, in the imperial civil service examinations (Wong, 1977, p.110 and Zheng, 2014, p.267-269).

DDC was introduced into China in 1909, although it wasn't the first Western indexing system introduced (Zheng, 2014, p.274). It was, however, the most influential modern system albeit it was deemed inadequate in dealing with Chinese books (Wong, 1977, p.111 and Cheng, 1991, p.384). Several Chinese librarians started compiling new schemes based on DDC, including Liu Guojun's contribution (LIU) in 1929 (Zheng, 2014, p.275).

Although an earlier scheme based on DDC was widely adopted in China (Wong, 1977, p.111 and Lin, 1998, p.149), it was LIU that significantly shaped the future of Chinese classification (Quinn, 2014, p.163). LIU was updated in 1936 and went through a series of revisions in the 1950's (Lai, 2001). Indeed, within the SOAS library, there is a 1953 edition of LIU where the first main class for generalities has been replaced with Marxism-Leninism (Liu, 1953). Discussions on Liu Guojun's contribution could be found in the writings of Cheng (1991), Robins (1999) and Quinn (2014, p.163).

In 1964, the pre-communist version of LIU was revised and updated in Taiwan by Lai Yung-Hsiang and the LAI classification scheme was born. A history of Lai Yung-Hsiang's contribution to library science, from Taiwan to the Harvard-Yenching library, could be found in the writings of Lucas (1981, p.29) and Wang (2012).

LAI has been through 9 updates, with the latest completed in 2007. This much needed revision was performed by the National Central Library of Taiwan (NCL). LAI is commonly used in libraries across Taiwan (Lee, 1985, p.81 and Lai, 2007), in most Hong Kong schools before the handover (Chan et al., 1996), along with Macau and certain libraries of Singapore (Lai, 2007). A full breakdown of the LAI, in ten Portable Document Format files, is available through the NCL's website (see appendix 1).

Basic principles

LAI is classified by disciplines, with the divisions of classes based on fields of study (Chan & Hodges, 2007, p.326-327). In representing its classes and divisions, the notation of LAI follows the same system of symbols as DDC, whereby only Arabic numerals are used. It is therefore classed as an example of "*pure notation*" (see Chan & Hodges, 2007, p.313, also Lee 1985, p.82).

By comparison, we can see that with the implementation of the Pinyin romanization in Mainland China, libraries there have started filing entries in "transliterated Roman alphabetical order" (Barclay, 1995, p.226). The Classification of Chinese Libraries (CLC) used throughout the Mainland today uses an alphanumeric system of notation, rather like the Library of Congress classification (LCC) scheme (see appendix 2). For a comparative study of CLC in relation to LAI and LCC, readers could refer to a rather dated Chinese article written by C.F. Lee (1985).

With regards to the main classes and the divisions within, LAI uses three-digit numbers like DDC. Likewise, "zeros are put in as fillers in the numbers for the main classes, so each contains at least three digits" (Chan & Hodges, 2007, p.329). For example, LAI starts with 000 as the main class for generalities with 020 being the branch for library and information science. With more specific topics beyond the categories covered by the three digits, we follow the same route as DDC by placing a decimal point after the third digit (Chan & Hodges, 2007, p.330).

The ordering of decimal numbers is also comparable to DDC. So, for instance, the decimal numbers 023.4 in LAI (Cataloguing), is preceded by 023.332 (entries for Library classification schemes).

Chan & Hodges (2007, p.330) describes that with DDC, "the notation never *ends* with a zero after the decimal point" and the same is true for LAI. As we travel through the divisions, each level evolves from a broad term to the

more precise topic, indicated by the addition of a new digit. We can see this in the following example:

800   **Linguistics and literature**

   850   **Various Chinese literature**

      857   **Chinese Fiction**

         857.4   **Chinese short stories, novellas and vernacular fiction**

            857.46   **The Water Margins**

Chan & Hodges's (2007, p.331) observation of exceptions to the hierarchical structure within DDC is also relevant in LAI, where Botany and Zoology are still levelled as coordinating topics with biology rather than as a subtopic.

The general layout of LAI hasn't changed from LIU. In comparison to DDC, the first three classes start off the same, but in LIU/LAI, the three sciences are placed together. Chinese history and geography acquire its own main class, although to make way for this, Chinese literature is squeezed in with language and linguistics.

	LAI	LIU	DDC
000	Generalities	Generalities	Computer science, information & general works
100	Philosophy	Philosophy	Philosophy & psychology
200	Religion	Religion	Religion
300	Natural Sciences	Natural Sciences	Social sciences
400	Applied sciences	Applied sciences	Language
500	Social sciences	Social sciences	Science
600	History & Geography	History & Geography	Technology
700	World History & Geography	World History & Geography	Arts & recreation
800	Linguistics & Literature	Linguistics & Literature	Literature
900	The Arts	The Arts	History & geography

Within the hundred divisions, there are certain notable additions in LAI. LIU contains several unassigned divisions (see appendix 3) and these have been filled in LAI. Judaism (260 in LAI) is usually found within 'other religions' in LIU (276) and likewise, mining (450), decorative arts (960), arts and crafts (970), and drama (980) are found within the thousand sections in LIU.

Compared with DDC, there is a significant increase in space for documents relating to China. With the exception of modern disciplines like computer science, technology and certain branches of health and medicine, much of the changes we see in LAI could be attributed to the LIU original.

Class 000 remains as a general class, although computer science has moved into 312 under mathematics. Manuscripts and rare books take the place of computer science within generalities, leaving 090 for Chinese classics. The addition of sinology in 030 pushes encyclopaedias into 040, which is unassigned in DDC. Journalism moves into 890, under linguistics and literature, giving room for collected essays and general series.

	LAI	DDC
000	Generalities	Computer science, knowledge & systems
010	Bibliographies and literacy (documentation)	Bibliographies
020	Library & Information Science, Archive Management	Library & information sciences
030	Sinology	Encyclopaedias & books of facts
040	General encyclopaedias	[Unassigned]
050	Serial publications & periodicals	Magazines, journals & serials
060	General organizations & Museology	Associations, organizations & museums
070	General collected essays	News media, journalism & publishing
080	General series	General collections
090	Collected Chinese classics	Manuscripts & rare books

Class 100 covers philosophy but with a greater emphasis on Chinese and Oriental thought, as we would expect. 110 contains overviews of both

Chinese and Western thought and learning and this leads into a division entirely dedicated to Chinese philosophy, which is broken down chronologically by dynasty. Oriental philosophy, covering most of Asia, is followed by a category for Western philosophy. This includes most of what is usually found within 140 and 190 in DDC, along with ancient and medieval philosophy from 180 of DDC. Parapsychology has moved into 175, under psychology and occultism is categorized within class 200 of religion. Aesthetics is an additional division before we come to ethics.

	LAI	DDC
100	Philosophy	Philosophy
110	Thoughts and learning	Metaphysics
120	Chinese philosophy	Epistemology
130	Oriental philosophy	Parapsychology & occultism
140	Western philosophy	Philosophical schools of thought
150	Logic	Psychology
160	Metaphysics	Logic
170	Psychology	Ethics
180	Aesthetics	Ancient, medieval & eastern philosophy
190	Ethics	Modern western philosophy

Class 200 in DDC is almost entirely devoted to Christianity and as such, a major revision is expected in LAI. Better space is given to Buddhism, Taoism, Islam and Judaism. We also see separate divisions dealing with entries on mythology and a further one on astrology and superstition. The latter includes documents on Chinese geomancy as well as subjects classed as occultism in DDC.

	LAI	DDC
200	Religion	Religion
210	Science of religion	Philosophy & theory of religion
220	Buddhism	The Bible
230	Taoism	Christianity & Christian theology
240	Christianity	Christian practice & observance
250	Islam (Mohammedanism)	Christian pastoral practice & religious orders
260	Judaism	Christian organization, social work & worship
270	Other religions	History of Christianity
280	Mythology	Christian denominations
290	Astrology and superstition	Other religions

Since class 300 in LAI covers the natural sciences, I will compare it will class 500 of DDC. On the whole, the divisions are generally the same. Palaeontology comes under 359 in biological science with LAI, making a space for anthropology which is found amongst the social sciences in DDC.

	LAI		DDC
300	Science	500	Science
310	Mathematics	510	Mathematics
320	Astronomy	520	Astronomy
330	Physics	530	Physics
340	Chemistry	540	Chemistry
350	Earth sciences & geology	550	Earth sciences & geology
360	Biological science	560	Palaeontology
370	Botany	570	Life sciences; biology
380	Zoology	580	Botany
390	Anthropology	590	Zoology

Class 400 is applied sciences, similar to class 600 for technology in DDC. The division for medicine has been expanded to include Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Home economics, which now follows medical sciences, also includes aspects of building and construction. An additional division is created for mining and metallurgy. Overall, the division of manufacture for specific uses in DDC has been split between this new division and the division for manufacture. Aspects of various businesses, found in the class for social sciences in DDC has moved into this class forming one of the two divisions on commerce.

	LAI		DDC
400	Applied sciences	600	Technology
410	Medical sciences	610	Medicine & health
420	Home economics	620	Engineering
430	Agriculture	630	Agriculture
440	Engineering	640	Home & family management
450	Mining and metallurgy	650	Management & public relations
460	Chemical industries	660	Chemical engineering
470	Manufacture	670	Manufacturing
480	Commerce: various businesses	680	Manufacture for specific uses
490	Commerce: administration and management	690	Building & construction

Class 500 is devoted to the social sciences, corresponding to class 300 of DDC. We have already seen the transfer of anthropology into the natural sciences. Public administration is combined within political science. Social problems and services forms part of sociology, which stands alone under its own division. The remaining parts of commerce are incorporated along with communication and transport under economy.

	LAI		DDC
500	Social sciences	300	Social sciences, sociology & anthropology
510	Statistics	310	Statistics
520	Education	320	Political science
530	Rites and customs	330	Economics
540	Sociology	340	Law
550	Economy	350	Public administration & military science
560	Finance	360	Social problems & social services
570	Political science	370	Education
580	Law; Jurisprudence	380	Commerce, communications & transportation
590	Military science	390	Customs, etiquette & folklore

With the exception of the first division, Class 600 comprises the whole of Chinese history and geography. There is no equivalent main class division within DDC.

	LAI		DDC
600	History and geography	900	History and geography
610	History and geography of China	931 & 951	China to 420AD China and adjacent areas
620	Chinese history by period		
630	History of Chinese civilisation		
640	Diplomatic history of China		
650	Historical sources		
660	Geography of China	915	Geography of & travel in Asia
670	Local history in China		
680	Topical topography of China		
690	Chinese travel guides		

Class 700 covers the history and geography for the rest of the world. In comparison to class 900 of DDC, one of the most obvious features is the incorporation of geography and travel within each division in LAI. Genealogy is merged within Biography. Both Polar Regions are included in Oceania and other. Antiquities and archaeology have its own division and interestingly, this is where Chinese antiquities is to be found.

	LAI		DDC
700	[unassigned]	900	History
710	World history and geography	910	Geography & travel
720	Oceans and seas	920	Biography & genealogy
730	History and geography of Asia	930	History of ancient world (to ca. 499)
740	History and geography of Europe	940	History of Europe
750	History and geography of the Americas	950	History of Asia
760	History and geography of the Africa	960	History of Africa
770	Hist. and geo. of Oceania & others	970	History of North America
780	Biographies	980	History of South America
790	Antiquities & archaeology	990	History of other areas

Class 800 combines linguistics, languages (including the many dialects of China) with literature. Chinese literature is given four divisions. Taiwanese literature is classed within Oriental literature.

	LAI		DDC
800	Linguistics and languages	400-490	Language
810	Literature (Belles-Lettres)	810	Literature, rhetoric & criticism
820	Chinese literature	890	Other literatures
830	Chinese literature: general collections		
840	Chinese literature: individual works		
850	Various Chinese literature		
860	Oriental literature		
870	Western literature	810-880	American, English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Latin and Classical Greek literatures
880	Literature of other countries	880-890	Modern Greek and other literatures
890	Journalism	070	Journalism

The final class of 900 is devoted to the arts and in comparison to class 700 of DDC, there are only minor alterations on the surface of things. Arts and crafts is a new division including tea ceremony, flower arranging (a major art form in Japan) and dance, which is found under the division of sports, games and entertainment in DDC. Likewise, theatre, which is found under stage presentations in DDC is given its own division. Printmaking depends entirely on technique and is generally classified under engraving in 937 or decorative arts for more industrial techniques (e.g. screen printing).

LAI			DDC	
900	Arts	700	Arts
910	Music	710	Landscaping & area planning
920	Architecture	720	Architecture
930	Sculpture	730	Sculpture, ceramics & metalwork
940	Drawing, painting & calligraphy	740	Drawing & decorative arts
950	Photography & computer art	750	Painting
960	Decorative arts	760	Graphic arts; Printmaking
970	Arts and crafts	770	Photography & computer art
980	Theatre	780	Music
990	Recreation and leisure	790	Sports, games & entertainment

Strengths and weaknesses

Following Lois Mai Chan's analysis of the merits and weaknesses of DDC (see Chan & Hodges, 2007, p.332-333), I would like to adapt some of her findings to highlight the suitability of LAI in relation to Hong Kong, starting with the strengths:

- The pure notation of Arabic numerals is beneficial in Hong Kong, as most English language books are shelved by DDC. Although some of the divisions are a little different, it is much easier for someone to adapt from one to another;
- Like DDC, the structure of classification develops from general to specific, making it very usable in terms of browsing;
- The idea of relative location borrowed from DDC, where items are shelved in relation to other documents gives flexibility to the ever-changing atmosphere of Hong Kong;
- It is an international system. Compared with CLC, it is not overtly political in its arrangement;
- Although it hasn't been revised in as regular intervals as, say DDC, the fact that it's now edited by a team from the NCL gives it further authority.

With regards to its weaknesses:

- There is obviously an Asian bias in its arrangement, but this is to accommodate the level of books on Asian subjects written in Chinese;
- Certain related disciplines are still scattered throughout the classes;
- Compared with CLC and LCC, the decimal system restricts the capacity of the main class levels;
- The placement of certain subjects is still questionable, despite changes.

Conclusion

> "[T]here is no perfect classification scheme" (Liu et al, 2012, p.865)

For libraries with large collections of Chinese language documents, the observations above are worth considering. But there is one major factor that I have yet to mention: cost, especially in light of the greater number of Chinese publications from Mainland China (Liu et al., 2012, p.854).

A recent paper by Liu et al. (2012) provided a background for the change of classification scheme for the at the Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) library. Some of the reasons for the change from LAI to CLC are as followings:

- vendor service of providing the cataloguing records together with materials acquired;
- the availability of the cataloguing records that can download from the China Academic Library and Information System database (CALIS);
- the ability to obtain the classification number from the National Library of China.

At the University of Hong Kong (HKU), the change from LAI to LCC at the Fung Ping Shan library is described in a PowerPoint document by Annabelle Pau and Peter Sidorko (2006). They listed the benefits of the change as follows:

- Greater uniformity of the Chinese, Japanese and Korean collections;
- An easier classification systems for users;
- Regular revisions available electronically;
- Enabling cross collection search;
- Saving on resources;
- Long-term saving through shared cataloguing via the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC).

If LAI were to last in the future, serious considerations need to be made. Most of the benefits mentioned above help reduce the cost of cataloguing and "speed up the turnaround time for materials to become available to users" (Liu et al, 2012, p.865). Like DDC, LAI has to be regularly updated to stay relevant. Having the NCL on board is just the first step of many that could make LAI a serious contender to CLC and LCC, for the future is ever changing and classification schemes must stay relevant and cost effective to survive.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: New Classification of Chinese Libraries (LAI)

Index of downloads available at:

http://catweb.ncl.edu.tw/portal_e3_cnt_page.php?button_num=e3&folder_id=249&cnt_id=680&sn_judge=1 [30 April 2015]

Portable Document Format files for each main class:

Class 000:

http://catweb.ncl.edu.tw/flysheet_admin/new_file_download.php?Pact=FileDownLoad&Pval=1883 [30 April 2015]

Class 100:

http://catweb.ncl.edu.tw/flysheet_admin/new_file_download.php?Pact=FileDownLoad&Pval=1884 [30 April 2015]

Class 200:

http://catweb.ncl.edu.tw/flysheet_admin/new_file_download.php?Pact=FileDownLoad&Pval=1885 [30 April 2015]

Class 300:

http://catweb.ncl.edu.tw/flysheet_admin/new_file_download.php?Pact=FileDownLoad&Pval=1886 [30 April 2015]

Class 400:

http://catweb.ncl.edu.tw/flysheet_admin/new_file_download.php?Pact=FileDownLoad&Pval=1887 [30 April 2015]

Class 500:

http://catweb.ncl.edu.tw/flysheet_admin/new_file_download.php?Pact=FileDownLoad&Pval=1888 [30 April 2015]

Class 600:

http://catweb.ncl.edu.tw/flysheet_admin/new_file_download.php?Pact=FileDownLoad&Pval=1889 [30 April 2015]

Class 700:

http://catweb.ncl.edu.tw/flysheet_admin/new_file_download.php?Pact=FileDownLoad&Pval=1890 [30 April 2015]

Class 800:

http://catweb.ncl.edu.tw/flysheet_admin/new_file_download.php?Pact=FileDownLoad&Pval=1891 [30 April 2015]

Class 900:

http://catweb.ncl.edu.tw/flysheet_admin/new_file_download.php?Pact=FileDownLoad&Pval=1927 [30 April 2015]

Appendix 2: Chinese Library Classification scheme (CLC)

Portable Document Format files in Chinese available at:
http://www.zju.edu.cn/jzus/download/clc.pdf [30 April 2015]

A	Marxism, Leninism, Maoism & the theories of Deng Xiaoping
B	Philosophy and Religions
C	Social Sciences
D	Politics and Law
E	Military Science
F	Economics
G	Culture, Science, Education and Sports
H	Languages and Linguistics
I	Literature
J	Art
K	History and Geography
N	Natural Science
O	Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry
P	Astronomy and Geoscience
Q	Life Sciences
R	Medicine and Health Sciences
S	Agricultural Science
T	Industrial Technology
U	Transportation
V	Aviation and Aerospace
X	Environmental Science
Z	Generalities

Hong Kong Public Library's version of LIU in Chinese available at:
https://www.hkpl.gov.hk/en/collections/catalogues/library-collection-classification.html#tc [30 April 2015]

000	**Generalities**		**500**	**Social Sciences**
010	Bibliography		510	Statistics
020	Library science		520	Education
030	Sinology		530	Rites and customs
040	Encyclopaedias		540	Sociology
050	Periodicals		550	Economics
060	General organisations		560	Finance
070	General collected essays		570	Political science
080	General series		580	Law
090	Collected Chinese classics		590	Military science
100	**Philosophy Subjects**		**600**	**Chinese History**
110	History of thought		610	General Chinese history
120	Chinese philosophy		620	History by period
130	Eastern philosophy		630	Cultural history
140	Western philosophy		640	Diplomatic history
150	Logic		650	Historical sources
160	Metaphysics		660	Geography
170	Psychology		670	Local history
180	Aesthetics		680	Topography
190	Ethics		690	Chinese travel guides

200	Religious Subjects	700	World History, Biography
210	Science of religion	710	History
220	Buddhism	720	Ocean
230	Taoism	730	Asia
240	Christian	740	Europe
250	Islam	750	America
260	[unassigned]	760	Africa
270	Other religions	770	Australia and other
280	Mythology	780	Biography
290	Astrology and superstition	790	Archaeology

300	Natural science	800	Linguistics, Literature
310	Mathematics	810	Literature
320	Astronomy	820	Chinese literature
330	Physics	830	General collections
340	Chemistry	840	Other literature
350	Earth science	850	Specific subjects
360	Biology	860	Oriental literature
370	Botany	870	Western literature
380	Zoology	880	Translated of poetry & plays
390	Anthropology	889	Translated fiction
		890	Journalism

400	Applied Science	900	Art, entertainment
410	Medicine	910	Music
420	Home economics	920	Architecture
430	Agriculture	930	Sculpture
440	Engineering	940	Painting and calligraphy
450	[unassigned]	950	Photography
460	Applied chemistry, Chemical technology	960	[unassigned]
470	Manufacture	970	[unassigned]
480	Various business	980	[unassigned]
490	Administration & Management	990	Recreation