Introduction

In the evaluation of cataloging rules, their usability, as well as the validity of theory, should be taken into consideration. Especially in the days to come, how they are adaptable to the ever-changing information environment will be an indispensable point of view. As detailed below, we once had an unfortunate experience where Nippon Cataloging Rules. 1965 Edition was ignored by many libraries despite the great effort made to enhance its former version based on the Paris Principles (PP). It is true that the cataloging rules have to be a logically organized system, but that is not enough. They have to be practical, and their true value lies in the extent to which they are effectively applied.

As for the matter of practicability, our catalogs are no longer made of cards. Catalogs are systematically created so that machine-readable records can be shared, and library users are now supplied with OPAC. Compared with past, time and efforts spent for the maintenance of catalogs have become extremely small. However, changes in the information environment have called for other issues. For example, now people rely more on search engines, a fruit of advanced information technology, than libraries and their catalogs when they look for information. In search engines people use whatever words and phrases they think of, and there are even support devices in some of them. Their simplicity and convenience is extremely attractive, and what is more, their information coverage usually expands across several library catalogs.

Furthermore, results (secondary or surrogate information) acquired by powerful search engines have now come to be linked to their originals or to library collections by a Link Resolver software. People are now able to gain the information they seek simply and easily, without even taking notice of the intermediate information such as library catalogs. (Although catalog information here does not seem to be in use at a glance, it is recognized and utilized by the software.) In a time when information is being rapidly digitized and methods like full-text searching are coming into wide use, it is essential to examine if our cataloging rules are properly modeling the actual world of information publication and are constructed to fulfill their expected roles.


In July 1959, the Preliminary Meeting of International Conference on Cataloguing Principles (ICCP) was held by International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) in London. Japan sent Keitaro Amano to report on the current status of Nippon Cataloging Rules. At that time, NCR was in its 1952 edition which mainly succeeded the pre-war cataloging rules of the League of Japanese Young Librarian, while also referring to *A.L.A. Cataloging Rules for Author and Title Entries. 2nd. ed.* and *Rules for Descriptive Cataloging in the Library of Congress. Nippon Cataloging Rules. 1952 Edition* (NCR 52) had adopted the main entry system, and when the meeting was held it was in the process of revision. The actual revision was held in wait for the discussions to come at the Paris conference planned the next year. (It was Hatsuo Nakamura who represented Japan.)

Responding to the ICCP results, the rules for the headings were rewritten in accordance with the Paris Principles. The committee prepared a draft revision, and taking the outcome of other expert meetings within the country into consideration, *Nippon Cataloging Rules. 1965 Edition* was published in May of that year.

NCR65 consists of Explanatory Notes, Introduction (Object of Catalog, Categories of Catalog, Author-Tile
Catalog, Functions of Author-Tile Catalog, Cataloging Rules, History of This Rules, etc.), Chapters and Appendix (Definition of Terms, Table of Country Names, Table of Anonymous Classics, Table of Abbreviations in Foreign Languages, Notational Systems for Kana and Roman Letters, Table of Standard Trasliteration, Card Samples), and Index. Chapter 1 is General Rules, showing ‘Purpose of the Rules, Structure of Catalog, Headings, Choice of Uniform Headings, Phonetic Notation of Headings, Scope of Entry, Form of Main Entries, Form of Added Entries, Analytical Entries, Reference and its Form, and Format Specification of Card Catalog. Subsequent chapters detail each topic. Chapter 2: Works of Single Personal Author, Chapter 3: Form of Single Personal Author Names, Chapter 4: Works of Single Corporate Body, Chapter 5: Form of Single Corporate Body Names, Chapter 6: Works of Multiple Authorship, Chapter 7: Serials, Chapter 8: Anonymous Works, Chapter 9: Works Related to the Existing Works, Chapter 10: Works in Various Types, Chapter 11: Description for Books, Chapter 12: Statement of Titles, Authors, Edition, and etc., Chapter 13: Publication, Chapter 14: Collation, Chapter 15: Notes, Chapter 16: Tracings, Chapter 17: Description for Serials, Chapter 18: Description for Maps, Chapter 19: Description for Musical Scores, and Chapter 20: Filing of Entry. The first half consists of the headings established according with the PP, and the second half deals with descriptions in detail. Introduction and Chapter 1 take up PP’s “Functions of Catalog,” “Structure of Catalog,” “Kinds of Entry,” “Use of Multiple Entries,” “Functions of Different Kinds of Entry” and “Choice of Uniform Heading,” and other part of PP are covered through Chapters 2 to 10.

The special features of NCR65 were its accordance with the PP and the author main entry system taken over from the rules of the League of Japanese Young Librarian. The rules covered all materials, not limited to wakansho (literally means ‘Japanese and Chinese book’, but it implies all books written in Chinese characters published in Japan, China, Korea and other area ), and the rules for various non-book materials as well as filing of entries were newly added this time. In fact, the discussions concerning the form of headings, such as personal names, corporate body names, and uniform titles, have not much proceeded since then in Japan. It is a matter of course considering that the international cataloging principles have not changed. There is, however, an issue unique to Japan. As an attribute to the Japanese language, yomi, or phonetic notations are indispensable in the headings for the purpose of filing and searching. NCR65 ruled that “phonetic notations should be written in either kana or roman letters”.

NCR65 later came to be unjustly criticized, centering on the issue of the main entry system. These were the growing years of Japanese public libraries and the library management that emphasized face-to-face services to the customer was called for. It goes without saying a method that would simplify and quicken the cataloging work was being in demand. Spurred by the advancement of copying technology, kijutsu dokuritsu hoshiki (description-independent system) came back to be favored by many libraries. This method saved a lot of time and effort spent for the main entry system by separating descriptions and headings. Making copies of the unit cards with descriptions, librarians were only to fill the appropriate headings. Japan Library Association issued Text for Technical Processing: Guidelines for Simplified Practices. Rev. ed. in 1969 to popularize this system. This of course went away from the principles of NCR65, resulting in the existence of two different cataloging standards. There were several factors involved in this, but one of them came out of the two different views concerning the cataloging rules. On one hand, cataloging rules are a tool for the individual libraries to create their catalogs of collection materials, but on the other hand cataloging rules also make it possible to compile a national bibliography, union catalogs and bibliographies in general. It can be said that the former view won the tide of the time. From a practical point of view, it was impossible for medium-small public libraries to compile their catalogs according to NCR65, and today they are not expected to do so. At that moment, however, the arguments over these issues can be said to have been still immature and ill-differentiated. Still, they greatly
influenced the future course of Nippon Cataloging Rules.

2. Development of Nippon Cataloging Rules (NCR) Since

2.1 *Nippon Cataloging Rules. Preliminary Edition* (NCR77)

The International Meeting of Cataloguing Experts was held in 1969 in Copenhagen to discuss the International Standard for Bibliographic Description (ISBD). In Japan, a new committee of cataloging was formed in 1970, and while keeping an eye on this move, they started to grapple with the pressing task of regulating the relation of NCR65 and *Text for Technical Processing. Rev. ed.* The committee proposed the use of ‘unit card without the heading’ (later called ‘description unit card’, which does not carry tracings but heading indications) at the first National Meeting of Technical Processing. Their proposal foresaw the computerization of catalog and the structure of ISBD was applied to the unit card.

NCR77 explains that description unit card “completes the description independently of the heading. The necessary headings are indicated (equivalent to ‘traced’), and making copies of these cards, various categories of catalogs are compiled under the headings. This method, under the multiple entry system, resolves various faults of the main entry system, and in addition, leaves the advantages of it mostly intact.” Furthermore, the table of Choice of Heading for the Single Entry System was attached to NCR77 for the purpose of making single entry catalog to fulfill all the catalog functions as defined in the PP.

In this way, compromise between the two opposed views was attempted drawing upon ISBD. In 1977 *Nippon Cataloging Rules. Preliminary Edition* (NCR77) was brought into the world, yet all the issues pointed out by the PP were not solved. Moreover, if the description rules both in NCR77 and ISBD are examined closely, the former shows more consideration for the publications within Japan in the rules concerning sources of information and also the use of punctuation of ISBD was only encouraged for national bibliographic agencies, and not introduced to individual libraries. The headings like titles and author names should be transcribed firstly from the description part and the rules for headings form were simplified. In addition, the letters to be used for this purpose were to be mainly *katakana* in the Japanese pronunciation, showing consideration for medium-small libraries.

NCR77 remained a stopgap measure for the conflicts of the time, and its application range was limited only to *washo* (Japanese books) published since the Meiji Era (1868-1912). Still, the principle shown here, that is, “the main entry system was to be adopted when the single entry system was taken; otherwise headings are to be alternative” gradually made its way. The influence it caused exceeds far more than what the name “Preliminary” suggested.


New committee members were appointed in 1983, and set out for its task of making NCR77 into a comprehensive set cataloging rules, that is, making the preliminary edition into a complete one. Their task, however, was not only to supplement what were not covered by NCR77, but also to reexamine the principles themselves and changes in the environment. The catalog had been computerized extensively by then, and the main format of the catalog was rapidly being shifted into MARC. Sharing a catalog online, and entering bibliographic information to a union catalog—it was a time when this kind of possibility had to be taken into consideration.

First, the decision was made to retain the alternative heading system of NCR77 and to develop the articles for headings. The crucial difference of NCR87 from NCR77 is that the unit for the description is no longer physical units (the name ‘description unit card system’ was changed to ‘description unit system’). With NCR77, libraries
described materials at hand by the “physical unit” (“descriptions, as a general rule, are to be made for each book.”) In NCR87, however, it is ruled that “monographic materials or serials are to be the objects of description.”

So-called “bibliographic unit” came to be the standard in creating bibliographic records. It is used as the unit when recording published works, defined as “a series of bibliographic elements starting with a proper title.”

Also, most publications have the bibliographic structure representing “the whole and its component parts (e.g. the title of ‘a set publication’ and those of monographs), that is, the upper and lower hierarchy,” and bibliographic units are established for each level of bibliographic structure.

Thus, the placing of description units, when there is a hierarchical structure, to an appropriate bibliographic level comes to be an issue for NCR87. Starting with the basic level is most common, but it can be started with an upper level or even the component unit. On the basic level, two units, monographic bibliographic unit and serial bibliographic unit, are established. The collective bibliographic unit is for series publications, and component bibliographic unit is on the analytical level (or the component level). The ISBD is employed for these description rules, and the punctuation system was introduced as the standard in NCR87.

The concept of bibliographic level was brought in because Japan customarily had a lot of set publications, and focus of descriptions for them often varied from library to library. This kind of confusion was seen even in the printed cards published by National Diet Library at the time, and was being considered problematic. The fact that it would hinder the creation of shared catalogs and union catalogs finally came to be recognized. Changing of the rules themselves, rather than the operation of them, was considered necessary to solve this problem.

NCR87’s structuring system of bibliographic records based on the bibliographic unit and level takes the title of a work when it is considered as an entity and a manifestation is specified in accordance with the bibliographic level. This method could also solve the problem of multi-volume/multi-part structure. When creating a bibliographic record, the whole can be integrated as one record, or a record may be made for each level and linked to each other (the union catalog compiled by Japanese university libraries takes this method). The method does not matter as long as the bibliographic record has sufficient and necessary information.

The coverage of NCR87 was expanded from wakansho to all library materials. Organized with Introduction, General Remarks, Part One: Description, Part Two: Headings, Part Three: Filing and Appendix, it came out as the most comprehensive cataloging rules issued in Japan up to then. At the time of 1987, there were some incomplete chapters (Chapter 8: Still Images, Chapter 10: Three-Dimensional Artifacts, Chapter 11: Non-Published Materials Including Archives and Manuscripts), and the deliberation was continued. Bearing this fruit, Nippon Cataloging Rules. 1987 Edition. Revision (NCR87R) as issued in 1994.

After NCR87R, revision of Chapter 9: Electronic Resources, which was becoming obsolete due to the increase and changes in such materials. They had been called machine-readable data files in the past. For the revision of this chapter, the revision of AACR2 and the dealing of packaged electronic materials at National Diet Library were taken into view. So were the Dublin Core and the metadata structure of subject gateway. Revised Chapter 9 was published in 2000, and incorporating it, Nippon Cataloging Rules. 1987 Edition. 2nd Revision (NCR87R2) was issued the next year.

Next, Chapter 13: Serials was in need of revision. Serials were as influenced by digitization and there were growing concerns internationally. Following the ISBD (CR) and the revised Chapter 12 of AACR2, where integrated materials were added to serials, NCR compiled a draft revision (Chapter 13: Serials). What came to be an issue here was the management of title changes in the vast union catalog database administered by National Institute of Informatics. Before the revision, any change in the title had mechanically resulted in creation of another record, but this time it was conformed to ISBD.

As for the collection of early printed books and old manuscripts in Japan, the individual holding institutes had
created their catalogs to be collected as *Kokusho Somokuroku* (1963-1975) and *Kotenseki Sogomokuroku* (1990). Because of their existences, Nippon Cataloging Rules had limited their coverage to materials published since the end of 19th century. With the environment for the creation of union catalogs online well matured, however, there was a growing voice demanding the cataloging rules that would enable the creation of a detailed catalog of the materials owned by each library. Answering to this voice, NCR revised its second (Books) and third (Manuscripts) chapters and ruled that catalogs of early printed books and old manuscripts were to be created, in definition of FRBR, not by a manifestation but by individual materials (each item). Incorporating these two revisions, *Nippon Cataloging Rules. 1987 Edition. 3rd Revision* (NCR87R3) was published in June 2006.

3. Future Tasks and Summary of ‘Similarities and Differences’ between NCR and International Cataloging Principles

Looking back on these few decades of the history of Nippon Cataloging Rules, I am amazed at how these ingenuities have made our catalog searches simple, easy and quick. We now acquire a vast amount of catalog information in one sweep, utilize them to our own needs. Another notable change is the huge drop in the number of people engaged in the cataloging work, thanks to the computers taking over a massive amount of once manual labor.

The Committee of Cataloging has finished nearly all of revising tasks of NCR87. Feeling the time has matured for the next edition of *Nippon Cataloging Rules* in a new framework, we have commenced our preparatory works with reviewing the FRBR and the moves for AACR3 (RDA). The concept of the future cataloging rules and metadata standard should more focus on the works and expressions as well as the identification of manifestation level object as we have done so far. And we have to answer to the need for fuller content descriptions. Furthermore, the interoperability with other communities has to be taken into consideration.

Lastly, I have summarized the similarities and differences between NCR and international cataloging principles touched upon in the discussion of the development of NCR.

‘Similarities and Differences’ between NCR and International Cataloging Principles

1) Bibliographic Description and Catalog Entries

- Bibliographic description of NCR87 is consistent with ISBD. When contradictory with the past NCR rules, an alternative article is supplied to conform to ISBD (e.g. parallel title and the punctuation). There are, however, small exceptions. Colophons are referred to for the chief sources of information, complying with the publication custom in Japan, and inaccuracies are to be corrected.

- As for the catalog entries, NCR takes the alternative heading system. When the single entry system is taken, however, the main entry system is made possible in a way that realizes the catalog functions shown in the PP.

2) Personal Names and Corporate Names

- NCR avoids using the term “access point.” The term was deemed improper to call something controlled by the machine-readable catalog data. What AACR2 and ICP refers to as “access point” is still termed “heading” in NCR. The Committee of Cataloging, however, does not regard this as a problem considering the term has been in use for a long time now and the meaning may have changed.

- The choice of heading basically conforms to ICP. As a rule, however, headings should be chosen from the main body of description of targeted bibliographic level unit, though headings from other levels can be chosen when necessary.
NCR87 standardizes the use of katakana in the headings for materials written in Japanese and the kanji notation to be added when necessary. (For the western materials, the use of roman letters is specified.) In many of actual operations, however, headings are written in both katakana and kanji, and when the authority files are attached, references are made in various forms. In either case, the original notations and their phonetic notations are both indispensible as an attribute of the Japanese language. Yomi, or phonetic notations (reading notations), involves various judgments because it is not a simple transliteration or romanization. Kana, katakana, and roman letters have been in user for the notation of yomi.

Personal names are written according with the rules of PP and ICP. The year of birth as an additional information cannot be specified for living persons to ensure the protection of personal information, except when such information is clarified in the work itself.

Corporate names are also based on PP, but with NCR87 the name stated as the responsible body is to be adopted in the heading. Different from AACR2, geographical names are not considered to be corporate names, and this calls for discrepancies with PP and ICP. However, the Committee of Cataloging recognizes the need to reexamine the current practice of omitting or simplifying the name of internal organizations.

3) Seriality

NCR87R3 conformed the rules for seriality to ISBD(CR). Some rules of ISBD(CR) concerning the title, however, are linguistically incompatible (e.g. spacing and position of key words). For this reason there are some additional rules for Japanese titles.

To manage the title changes of serials, a title transition map (a kind of authority titles) was created and is being constantly updated in union catalog databases.

4) Uniform Title and General Material Designation

Uniform title also conforms to PP and ICP. Practical application of the rules, however, is quite limited to materials like anonymous classics and scriptures. Among the holders of old printed books and manuscripts and the music libraries, there are community properties.

GMD mostly accords with ISBD. There are confusions as to the distinction between mode of expressions and that of manifestations. Considering they are only temporary and expedient, the Committee of Cataloging has held off on taking actions.

5) Multi-volume/Multi-part Structure

This issue is examined from the perspective of bibliographic unit and bibliographic level. How the bibliographic structure is analyzed and how bibliographic records are composed are two different issues. Centering on the level of monographs will format the record with more structures, this is most conventional practice. Alternatively, a record can be made for each level and then linked to each other (there is a technology for it).

2 Hatsuo Nakamura reported the results of this conference in detail in Toshokanbashii (May 1962 issue), an institutional journal of Japan Library Association.