

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES IN CHINESE ASTRONOMY

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The development of the library science marks the progresses of science and culture in a country or a district. The study courses and results of a research institute are strongly reflected by its library and information work. The development of the astronomical research, the collection of astronomical observations, and the manufacture of astronomical instruments and equipments, etc., are all being made progress by library and information services to consult scientific foundation, to seek method, and to derive needed nourishment. The astronomical library and information service system is growing and expanding with continuously providing information to the astronomical study. In this paper I shall give some introductions about the Libraries and Information Divisions of astronomical observatories in our country.

I. THE LIBRARY

There are astronomical information service systems in existent astronomical observatories, stations, and some universities. Most of them are established based on the small information rooms and every one did not have many books and had only 1-2 librarians. By now, a quite complete system consists of the library, the information room, the editorial department of publications and the modern service equipments for typewriting, duplicating, typerecording, microfilm-reading, computer retrieve searching, etc. Rough statistical figure shows that the total number of the collected books in the libraries of our astronomical observatories and stations is more than 300,000 which involve the research fields of Astronomy, Earth-science, Space-science, Mathematics, Physics, Electronics, and Computer-science, etc. For most of the observatories or stations, the foreign publications amount to more than 60%, which does not involve the directly exchanged information with foreign astronomical unites and astronomers. The library of observatory pays attention to the availability of books, so that the demand for collection is speciality, but not extensity. There are differences in the types of the collections between the libraries of different observatories because of the different emphasis of research field. However, some nucleus of periodicals should be collected with complete volumes. There are some complete sets in Shanghai observatory's and the Purple Mountain observatory's library. For example, the Ap. J. and MN of RAS, A. AP., etc., are collected from the first volume published in last century to the current volume. Some Russian journals in whole set are collected also. In addition, the complete sets of various Star Map and Star Catalogs are col-

lected, too.

The Yunnan Observatory is a new one and it was established in 1970's, so it has a shorter history. The collection is charactered in new. A lot of new foreign books were bought at the International Book Fair directly, besides acquire books through conventional order from China National Publications Import & Export Corporation. Therefore, the library can provide the relatively foreign books to the scientific staff and the new research information is transferred as quickly as possible.

The forms of services in most of the libraries are mainly manual, the computer searching service has not been established popularly. As the major of the library patrons come from same observatory, so a lot of tedious formalities in management may be avoided. The reading conditions are very good and the reading rooms are comfortable and convenient. A sampling investigation has ever been made by the library of Yunnan Observatory, and about two thirds of the staff think that the ensure rate of literature offered by this library is 75%-50%. They can perform research tasks by taking use of this library.

II. INFORMATION SERVICE

(1) For most of the staff, their reading ability of foreign language is good, some of them have high ability in speaking, listening and writing. Therefore, selecting research subject, searching literature, etc. can be performed by themselves. The task of the Library and Information Division is emphatically to provide the information resource services, to announce the list of recent acquisitions in time, to provide information tracking on special topics for some important subjects or extended themes and new technological terms.

(2) The publications edited and issued by each observatory or station introduce the astronomical research accomplishments of Chinese astronomers to the world. As the medium of propagating scientific information, they are helpful for us to strengthen international association with foreign friends. We know that many of our publications are welcomed in abroad. Besides the <<ACTA ASTRONOMICA SINICA>>, <<PROGRESS IN ASTRONOMY>>, <<ACTA ASTROPHYSICA SINICA>>, we have been publishing the Publications of Observatory and the Reference Materials (most of them are translations). So far about 14 kinds of observatory's publication are being published in China.

(3) There are various methods and forms in information services adopted by each observatory's Library and Information Division in order to transfer information quickly. We have established relationship with hundreds units of dozens countries to exchange the information. The exchanged information is valuable and is welcomed by our scientific research staff. We can also get the information through the private communication with foreign astronomers.

(4) It is very effective to connect the Library and Information Divisions of observatories or stations to a network to perform the information services. Besides exchange the experiences of information services, it supplies a possibility for carrying out some great research subjects cooperatively. Not only the observatories and stations, but also the astronomical departments of some universities, space-science and Earth-science institutes have taken part in this network. The <<CHINESE ASTRONOMY ABSTRACT>> is published by this in-

formation network (from 1987) and the editorial department is composed of its members. The CAA is supported by the famous astronomers of our country and will be put on sale abroad in future.

III. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPUTER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

After several years' effort, there is a great progress in applying computer to library and information service system. For example, the system, developed by Library and Information Division of Shaanxi Astronomical Observatory, is not only practical, but also easy to operate (in Chinese and English). The same construction is in progress at the other Library and Information Divisions, too, but their speeds are different from each other. On the other hand, a work to establish astronomy science database started not long ago. It is hopeful that the computer network will be established in the near future. The effective resource share will be realized by the fully utilize of various data centres over the world, information source will be extended and the transfer speed of information will be promoted. An epoch-making progress in astronomy information services of China will take place.