

## COLLECTION DEVELOPING AT PURPLE MOUNTIAN OBSERVATORY: SEEKING EXCHANGES OF FOREIGN ASTRONOMY SERIALS

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**ABSTRACT.** Foreign exchange of astronomical serials as a means of developing a collection at the Purple Mountain Observatory is discussed.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Astronomy is a science that needs the most widespread international cooperation. It is necessary for an astronomical special library to make great efforts at seeking effective ways to obtain foreign publications while also collecting domestic publications. Different libraries have different collections, depending on their needs. Sometimes information sources discarded by one library would just meet the needs of another. Reciprocal agreements through international library exchange programs could make resource sharing mutually beneficial. Libraries on both sides of the agreement could develop their collections and, through sharing, set a standard of international cooperation.

### II. PRESENT SITUATION

Library development all over the world has been affected by inflation. Shortage of funds has made it difficult for the Purple Mountain Observatory Library to purchase foreign publications. Apart from cancelling a few rarely-used periodicals, we are seeking other ways in which to solve this problem: through purchasing, gifts, and international exchange.

Astronomy books, core journals, atlases, catalogues, as well as other books and periodicals in closely related sciences generally must be purchased. As astronomy is developing at a high speed, we must obtain information sources in a timely manner. Though astronomy/astrophysics books are of a superior academic level, they are normally published later than periodicals. Recently, much of our budget has been spent on atlases; and the remaining sum purchased foreign books and periodicals are in a ratio of of 3 : 7.

Since our library has a good reputation in China, a lot of books and periodicals were presented to us by institutions and scholars from different countries.

The majority are on the want lists of astronomical publications. We have found that little drops of water will make mighty oceans. These gifts increase the library collection and make useful and valuable materials available to our astronomers and scientists.

International exchange is the main way to obtain those publications which are hard to get or hard to purchase, and we rely on this method of acquisition, in order to maintain the relationship of exchange continuously, chiefly to obtain serials, though we receive some internally published monographs and books by exchange also. However, we receive few commercially-available publications. It is clear that the increasing collection of various serials is the result of a good exchange policy.

We stress that purchasing and international exchange have to share out the work and cooperate with one another, so the libraries can avoid unnecessary duplication. Exchange can ameliorate the lack of purchased publications. Sometimes we can get publications from international exchanges without purchasing. At present there are some 1300 astronomy serials published worldwide. Most of them are not commercial. Since the 1980's the library has subscribed to one hundred titles in astronomy which can be purchased from the open market, but we cannot get many of the noncommercial serials. In order to increase our serial collection, we have kept in touch with more than 200 foreign libraries, institutions and scholars in 44 countries through library exchanges. At the same time, we have received 430 astronomy serials and some other journals from our exchange partners. In other words, we have collected over 70% of the publications of observatories and institutes worldwide which are listed in ASTRONOMY AND ASTROPHYSICS ABSTRACTS.

Dr. Gao Lu was the former director of the Purple Mountain Observatory. In the Chinese astronomical community he was the first who engaged in international exchange, starting in 1915. Since then, the observatory has been in touch with over 400 institutions in about 60 countries. In sum, we have received more than 900 serials from foreign countries; that is, two-thirds of the foreign serials in our holdings.

### III. ADVANTAGES OF INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

At present, international exchange has become an established method of library acquisition. The following advantages are noteworthy:

a) International exchange is the main way to get foreign non-commercial publications. Internal publications of all astronomical institutions are provided through academic exchange with professional institutions and colleagues. These publications are not for sale, but are available on exchange.

b) Timeliness of information is important. In China, it normally takes six to eight months to receive foreign publications on subscription, but we may receive publications by direct mail via international exchange and save much time. In general, we receive monthly periodicals and

preprints within three months: some issues even arrived within their month of publication!

c) Making contributions to supplement one's collection. There are fewer titles on the ordering lists from Chinese libraries to foreign publishers. Because of budget restrictions, we always select only authoritative monographs, or those published in languages in widespread use. Through international exchanges, the library can supplement astronomical publications, especially those that are written in less common foreign languages.

We also try our best to obtain titles of new publications. For instance, preprints of different astronomical institutions are the earliest publications before articles are published in the refereed literature. These preprints can only be obtained through exchanges. We find that missing back issues of periodicals are difficult to purchase on the open market, but can often be obtained from duplicate exchange arrangements.

d) Academic exchanges promote friendship between different countries. International exchange is not a commercial activity. We stress exchange of information without caring about economic considerations. This builds not only academic exchange, but also builds close cooperation between institutions.

Some time ago, Purple Mountain Observatory was unable to offer its publication ACTA ASTRONOMICA SINICA for a period of seven years. Nevertheless, most exchange partners still sent us their various publications. This reflects the true friendship between partners. I express my heartfelt thanks to those dear friends.

#### IV. SELECTION OF EXCHANGE PARTNERS

The worldwide astronomical community generally takes academic exchange as its purpose. Most librarians adopt open exchange in the field of international exchange. At present, the library of the Purple Mountain Observatory only offers new serials and books which are published by the observatory and the Chinese Astronomical Society. If necessary, we would increase new publications in Chinese astronomy and the related sciences. Because of increases in international postage costs, we have limited funds, but we will enhance the exchange of duplicates in the future.

The publications offered by exchange partners in astronomy and the closely related sciences are welcome, regardless of language. We consider chiefly the following:

- a) Famous institutions of astronomy and their astronomers.
- b) Astronomy serials and books of high academic level.
- c) Publications useful for the Chinese astronomical community, and worthy of long-term use and preservation.
- d) Partners or publications recommended or requested by Chinese astronomers.

## V. CONCLUSION

There have been 300 years of international exchange. At present, the method of international exchange is generally adopted by Chinese astronomical librarians. What is the motivating force that gives international exchange such an important role in the library of the Purple Mountain Observatory?

Purple Mountain Observatory was built up in 1934. Since then it has an astronomy library with a satisfactory variety of books and serials, --a good foundation. So it may be enhanced on the basis of a good inheritance. The Observatory directors give support to the publication of various serials and books adopted by Purple Mountain Observatory and the Chinese Astronomical Society. They also support the library's international exchange program as carried out by an experienced professional librarian. Astronomers are the real motivating force for collection development. They draw new rich knowledge from the library; they author new astronomical literature and so contribute to the publications for exchange.

The relationship of astronomers and librarians is like the relationship between fish and water. Astronomers cooperate actively in selecting books and serials and provide us information about publishing news. When they visit foreign astronomical institutions, they promote international exchange of publications. Friendly relations and cooperation between astronomers and librarians exist in our observatory. It makes the library collection grow at a good rate, despite the shortage of funds in foreign currency. As a result, the library has gained the trust of the Chinese astronomers.

Apart from the internal factors, I consider the other factors. Existence of astronomy libraries depends on the development of the science of astronomy. International exchange illustrates this dependency. The relationships, thus, may directly influence our communications with our exchange partners. Meanwhile it is necessary for each of us to have a strong domestic policy supporting international exchange. It is necessary for us to support a strong publishing industry in China so, the outer environment is also an important factor of international exchange.