

FOREIGN ASTRONOMICAL LITERATURE ACQUISITIONS IN CHINA

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ABSTRACT. Foreign astronomical literature acquisition in China is accomplished in two ways: (1) by exchange of publications between China and foreign countries, and (2) by purchase of foreign publications.

1. EXCHANGE

So far as I know, all the observatories in China have been sending their publications abroad. In return, they have received many kinds of foreign astronomical publications: annual reports, special publications, reprints and preprints, proceedings, books, and a few periodicals and other publications.

Some of them are very useful to Chinese astronomers and can only be obtained through exchange; therefore we think that this is a very important source for acquiring foreign astronomical publications for Chinese astronomers.

In recent years some Chinese editors have been exchanging their journals directly with foreign editors. I think that this is a reasonable way to obtain foreign astronomical literature. Chinese editors and foreign editors could arrange an exchange agreement on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.

Some observatories, such as the Zo-Se Observatory and the Purple Mountain Observatory, were established many years ago. These two observatories have been receiving a great variety of foreign publications while other observatories might not be as well supplied, since their history is not as long. It is worth mentioning that Ms. Huang Bikun, of the Purple Mountain Observatory, and Ms. Zhou Shuqun, of the Shanghai Observatory, have made great efforts towards encouraging international exchange of astronomical literature.

At Shanghai Observatory, we have been sending our publication ANNALS OF THE ZO-SE OBSERVATORY abroad since 1966. From 1979 onwards we have also been distributing both the ANNALS OF THE SHANGHAI OBSERVATORY and special publications such as the TIME SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT. Meanwhile we have received many publications from foreign countries, and we are grateful for their cooperation.

Of course, I know that Chinese publications are very difficult for a foreign astronomer to read. This is a problem yet to be solved. I think that more and more Chinese publications should be published in English, if it is at all possible to do so. Since 1987 the PUBLICATIONS OF THE BEIJING OBSERVATORY has been published in English.

2. PURCHASE

I must point out here that the usual way to get foreign publications is to purchase them indirectly.

All the observatories and many universities in China have been subscribing to foreign astronomical periodicals from the China National Publications Import and Export Corporation. At present there are more than 100 astronomical periodicals which can be ordered from CNPIEC. These periodicals are published in 19 different countries, a fact which sometimes contributes to a delay in their being received in China. Chinese astronomers working at one observatory can borrow publications from other observatories or university libraries. Such resource sharing is important in every country.

3. HOPE

We hope that preprints will become increasingly available to all observatories. This is a challenge which will require cooperation from many sides; the solution is not obvious at present. I will be very pleased if this conference produces some useful techniques to solve the problems associated with this need. Chinese periodicals have almost no preprint distribution, since our research publishing funds are very limited and the printing facilities are not the most modern. We hope that foreign publishers and observatories will understand our situation and will not hesitate to give us your opinions and suggestions.