

CCM Subcommittee on Chinese Rare Books and Classics Report

Prepare by Susan Xue, Chair

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The CCM Subcommittee on Chinese Rare Books and Classics was formed and approved by the CEAL Executive Board on September 17, 2014 for a term of two years. The charge of the subcommittee was:

1. Identify training opportunity and coordinate continuing trainings in the areas of appraisal, preservation and cataloging of rare materials.
2. Work with the National library of China (NLC) and other institutions in developing and implementing RDA rules for cataloging rare books.
3. Communicate for member libraries' use of the NLC National Registration Platform for Chinese Rare Books.
4. Facilitate development of training material for rare books and share it with member libraries.
5. Coordinate the participation of libraries in North America in NLC's rare book survey project.

The term of the subcommittee was two years from October 2014 to September 2016. The members of the subcommittee are:

Shuwen Cao, Princeton University
Sarah Elman, Columbia University
Susan Xue (Chair, CCM Member), UC Berkeley
Haihui Zhang, University of Pittsburgh
Yuan Zhou, University of Chicago

Since the establishment of the subcommittee, we have accomplished the following work or events:

1. Coordinate with the NLC on participating in its rare book survey project. Representing the subcommittee, the chair communicated with the NLC and proposed collaboration on contributing rare book records, developing RDA rules for Chinese rare books, and possible rare book evaluation trips by NLC experts. Yuan Zhou also met with Mr. Zhang Zhiqing, Deputy Director of the NLC, to discuss ways of implementing some of the initiatives. The NLC has been actively engaging in the collaboration, and providing supporting materials including instructions and guidelines.
2. The NLC has surveyed nationally as well as internationally the distribution and current state of Chinese rare books. The National Registration Platform for Chinese Rare Books is the website that gathers and publishes the information. It is an invaluable platform to discover Chinese rare books by scholars and regular users. The subcommittee supported this work by coordinating libraries that have Chinese rare book collections to contribute bibliographic records. The subcommittee has communicated with more than 20 East Asian libraries/collections on the value of our participation, distributing instructions, manuals, requirements and specifications for rare book records. About a dozen of the EALs have participated in the survey and contributed bibliographic records.

3. Invited the NLC delegation to CEAL/CCM 201 annual conference to update the cooperation with East Asian collections in North America. Mr. Zhang Zhiqing delivered a written presentation “The Cooperation with EALs in North America on a Rare Book Catalog 北美中文古籍目录和合作”.
4. Worked with the NLC and the National Central Library (NCL) in Taiwan to develop and implement RDA rules for cataloging rare books. Sarah Elman and Shuwen Chao contributed greatly to this initiative. Sarah and Shuwen submitted the *Revised cataloging guidelines for Chinese rare books* (formerly the *Cataloging Guidelines for Creating Chinese Rare Book Records In Machine-Readable Form* = 中文善本書機讀目錄編目規則) in March 2016 to solicit comments, and hosted a discussion during AAS/CEAL conference in Seattle in March 2016. Sarah and Shuwen revised the rules based on comments collected and share it again in June 2016. Additional revisions are been incorporated and another version will be released for final comments before the 2017 CEAL Meeting.
5. The subcommittee requested the training materials used at the rare book training workshop held in the NLC in June 2014, however, due to various reasons, the NLC could not share the materials with CCM member libraries. In addition to authenticating rare book editions, conservation/preservation experts and/or know-how are also badly needed by East Asian Libraries which own Chinese rare books. Due to other priorities of CCM member libraries, this subcommittee did not pursue other training initiative in its term. It might be a task for next CCM or CCM subcommittee.

In the past two years, directors of East Asian libraries in North America have decided to partner with Zhonghua Book Company to compile and publish each library’s rare book catalog. With this as a priority for most libraries, one of the initiatives, appraisal trips by NLC experts to needed libraries in North America, has not been further pursued by the subcommittee.

With all members’ efforts, the CCM Subcommittee on Chinese Rare Books and Classics has completed the charge. Since the term of this subcommittee drew to a close in October 2016, I would propose to dissolve it. The next CCM could consider forming a new subcommittee for Chinese rare books if it is deemed desirable.