

CALA Delegates' Report

My Experience at the 2008 Sino-US Forum on Library Practices in Kunming, Yunnan, July 11-13

By Xue-Ming Bao

Sept. 12, 2008

I was glad to be selected by CALA to attend the 2008 Sino-US Forum on Library Practices in Kunming, Yunnan, July 11-13. I had a wonderful experience professionally, culturally and personally. I would like to thank the CALA leadership for making this kind of exchange programs possible. Being able to participate as a CALA member adds a new meaning to my CALA life membership. The following is my brief report.

1. Professionally, it was a great opportunity for me to learn the current status of librarianship in China. Listening to the eight Chinese speakers from key Chinese university libraries, I was able to learn their major interests in the development of digital book collections, Web 2.0 technology, services, staff and resources as well as the conservation of the intangible cultural heritage and special collections. I was impressed by the fact that most of the Chinese participants in the Forum submitted a paper. By analyzing the 200 titles of their submitted papers, I found three hot spots of interest: 1) about librarians and human resources (36 or 18%), 2) about services (31 or 15%), and 3) about information resources (28 or 14%). There were only four papers on library buildings (2%). However, the participants were eager to ask me questions after my presentation on exploring the new requirements for modern library buildings from the needs of opening 24/7. I had good learning exchanges with Chinese librarians during the session breaks and during the meals.

It was also an interesting occasion for me to meet other CALA members from the US. I learned a great deal from their presentations as well. Prof. Haiwang Yuan deserves high praise for his role as a CALA team leader. He coordinated and communicated well between the Chinese sponsor and the CALA team members; and he helped some team members with translation in getting their airline tickets changed. What's more, he took the tremendous responsibility of simultaneous translation of the presentations for both Chinese and American participants. It was a difficult and exhausting job but he did it with great enthusiasm. It was nice that the CALA leadership was able to invite Jim Rettig, the current ALA President to the Forum. It helped to boost the image of CALA in the eyes of our Chinese colleagues.

2. Culturally, I had a unique opportunity to learn the diversity of Chinese ethnic groups in Yunnan. The Chinese sponsor organized rich ethnic entertainment for us. We visited Yunnan ethnic villages, dined in an ethnic restaurant, and watched a renowned ethnic show "The Impression of Yunnan" (thanks to Liana Zhou for getting the precious tickets). We also visited the famous Stone Forest where I bought Yunnan specialty tea and souvenirs.
3. Personally, I was able to take my father with me for the trip to help him walk out of the shadow of my mother's passing away in 2007. My father and I also visited a relative in Kunming, whom we haven't seen for years.

All in all, I really enjoyed my trip and hope other CALA members will continue to have such opportunities in the future.

Report of the Kunming Conference
July 10-July 15, 2008, Kunming, Yunnan, China
Liana Hong Zhou
9/12/2008

1) Presentation and Scholarly Exchange

My presentation is titled "Secure Financial Future for Libraries and Special Collections: Building Endowments for the Kinsey Institute Library, Film and Archival Collections." My topic was focused on the financial aspects of the library operation, library being defined as a cultural institution of knowledge and information. The funding sources and financial challenges are different, yet similar, between the libraries in the States and in China. Building endowments for libraries in China will be a new and exciting challenge in years to come.

I attended all other presentations, events, and gatherings organized by the conference planner, and I learned a great deal about libraries and librarians in China. I thought all presentations were well planned and very informative. I also appreciated the opportunities to learn from the ALA President Jim Rettig and our fellow CALA members. CALA members did a fabulous job with their selection of topics, and their presentations. Jim Rettig's presentation was excellent.

2) Connections and Contacts

CALA's connection and collaboration with Yunnan university libraries are invaluable. And I am grateful to have had this professional exchange with library directors and librarians from many parts of China, representing large and small colleges and universities. Libraries are gems of our societies and librarians are proud and dedicated professionals with responsibilities to preserve, organize and provide access to the extraordinary resources. Our Chinese library counterparts are eager, energetic and talented, with ideas and visions for a better collection and a better library. I am pleased I was able to make a few contacts for Indiana University Libraries and a Indiana University faculty who plans to visit China in 2009.

3) Future collaborations

The Yunnan University Library directors expressed on numerous occasions their desires and plans for continuing the collaborations with CALA. Based on my experience, I strongly encourage CALA to continue its collaboration and association in a format that maximizes the benefits on both sides. This is my first participation of the Kunming conference, and I have benefited greatly from this experience on both personal and professional level.

Chongqing University Librarian Xie Rong participated in the conference in Kunming and had talked to me and other CALA members about her library's upcoming event in the summer of

2009, in Chongqing. I had expressed my interest in visiting her library and asked her to write a note to CALA (Haipeng) so CALA will know and consider her proposal. I would welcome the opportunity to visit her library and to make a presentation in Chongqing.

4) Thoughts and reflections

On a personal note, I enjoyed the trip because I made many new friends. CALA members Xueming Bao, Miao Hong, Haiwang Yuan, and Robert Fernekes are wonderful fellow librarians and friends. Special thanks go to Haiwan Yuan, our group leader, who worked so hard during the conference, communicating with our host organizations, interpreting and translating, making necessary arrangements for us. I learned Chen style Taiji from a fellow librarian Liu Kunshan, and made friends with many other librarians from Yunnan, Sichuan and Beijing.

It was energizing and refreshing to be among Chinese librarians whose vision and ambition for a better library was absolutely inspiring. I hope to have more opportunities to participate in seminars or conference such as this in the future. Thank you to CALA leaders who have established this program. Last but not least, my thanks to Lisa Zhao who helped us so much to better organized and prepared before our trip.

Kunming Seminar Report

Sept. 15, 2008

Miao Hong

The third Sino-U.S. Library Practice Forum was held from July 10-13, 2008 in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China, I have had the honor of being selected as a member of the CALA team to present at the event. The CALA participants, all from academic libraries in the U.S., conducted presentations on a wide range of topics including strategic collaboration for student success; how to secure financial future for libraries and special collections; the requirements for qualified librarians of the 21st Century; and requirements for modern library buildings, etc. The topic of my presentation is Recruitment and Selection Practices of American Academic Libraries. The major objective of my presentation was to introduce a fair, rational, nondiscriminatory and impartial recruitment process adopted by American academic libraries. I described the guidelines and procedures used by most academic libraries to recruit librarians in the U.S. and discussed the pros and cons of the traditional hiring approach. The presentation also included some suggestions for improvement in the literature for the prevailing recruitment practice.

The objectives of my presentation were fulfilled and the topic aroused some interests in the audience. Many participants have contacted me asking for the permission to use the materials and the sample questions of my presentation.

I am impressed what CALA has done through the years for the academic and educational exchange on librarianship between Chinese and American libraries, and I believe CALA will do more in the future to promote the collaboration with our Chinese counterparts to train library personnel in China. Yunnan is considered to be a rather remote region in China. Such province in the most southwest of the country has comparatively fewer opportunities for government-

sponsored international exchange compared to many other regions close to the metropolitan areas. This is particularly true of libraries in Yunnan. CALA will without doubt make its contribution to the development of libraries in China by continuing the already-established exchange and cooperation with the Chinese counterparts in Yunnan province.

I would like to thank CALA for taking on this important project and thank our team leader Mr. Haiwang Yuan for his brilliant work. His talent and commitment have been vital to the success of this event.

Report of the Kunming Conference
July 10-July 15, 2008, Kunming, Yunnan, China
Robert Fernekes
9/15/2008

1) Presentation and Scholarly Exchange

My presentation was titled “The Genius of US Academic Librarians: Opportunities for Collaboration.” My presentation explored the nature of collaboration, the collaboration continuum, the 7 C's of Strategic collaboration which provide guidelines for successful collaborations. The presentation examined three examples for partnering for student success: the Library Learning Commons, Information Literacy Efforts, and OCLC connecting the world's libraries and users. I discussed organizing principles, 21st Century Literacies, library effectiveness as it relates to institutional accreditation, and foremost, how to improve library effectiveness through collaboration.

The conference planner is to be congratulated for planning such a complete schedule of presentations, events, and gatherings for attendees to learn from each other and exchange ideas and insights. All presenters were informative, and did superb presentations.

2) Connections and Contacts

Along with my CALA colleagues, I made numerous contacts with librarians from China, and among CALA's presenters. These connections and contacts will yield dividends as our collaborations continue. I look forward to representing CALA on future travels to China.

3) Future collaborations

The Kunming Conference experience marks my first participation in a CALA co-sponsored conference. I was particularly impressed by the sincere interest in continuing collaborations and conference participation and support by the Yunnan University Library directors to include sending librarians to conferences held outside of China on an annual rotating basis, and possibly combining efforts with other universities when the conferences are in China (co-hosting two conferences side-by-side, such as Huazhong Normal University in Wuhan which has a primary

partnership with Georgia Southern University's College of Education to explore effective teaching strategies.

I welcome the opportunity of visiting and presenting in the summer of 2009 at Chongqing University's upcoming event as discussed by Chongqing University Librarian Xie Rong while participating in the Kunming Conference.

4) Thoughts and reflections

Making new friends with librarians in China and other CALA members—Xueming Bao, Miao Hong & Liana Hong Zhou, and renewing a friendship with Haiwang Yuan of 12 years was especially rewarding. My conference experience was made even better by Haiwang Yuan, as our group leader, interpreter, and special assistance for individual matters and arrangements.

In summary, collaborating with the other CALA members and Chinese librarians during the conference was an experience filled with fellowship, overflowing collegiality, and the wisdom of the ages as evidenced by the great strides being made by participant's libraries.