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North American Chinese Librarians Alliance: Historical Evolution, Organizational Form, and Strategic Direction (Postprint)

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] This study provides the first systematic description and holistic evaluation of the rise, development, and evolution of the North American Chinese Librarians Alliance, offering an in-depth revelation and accurate assessment of the alliance's identity and functions in the development of global librarianship and the construction of overseas Chinese society. [Method/Process] The paper comprehensively reviews the formation process, structural evolution, and strategic direction of the North American Chinese Librarians Alliance, focusing on examining the background, process, and impact of organizations such as the Committee on East Asian Libraries, the Chinese American Librarians Association, and the Society for Chinese Studies Librarians, and analyzes the strategic significance of Sino-American university library cooperative alliance organizations. [Results/Conclusion] The North American Chinese Librarians Alliance has undergone developmental stages including inception, maturation, and deepening, transitioning from early dispersed groups to regional integration, to high-level qualitative transformation in member structure, to the creation of a deeply integrated professional model, and finally establishing transnational alliances with the Chinese library community, thereby constructing a strategic pattern of internal-external coordination and mutual benefit.

Full Text

Preamble

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The Chinese Librarians' Alliance in North America: Historical Evolution, Organizational Form, and Strategic Direction

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Abstract: *[Purpose/Significance]* This study provides the first systematic description and comprehensive evaluation of the emergence, development, and evolution of the Chinese librarians' alliance in North America, offering an in-depth revelation and accurate assessment of its identity and function in the development of global librarianship and the construction of overseas Chinese society. *[Method/Process]* The paper comprehensively examines the formation process, structural evolution, and strategic direction of the alliance, focusing on the background, formation, and impact of organizations such as the Committee on East Asian Libraries, the Chinese American Librarians Association, and the Society for Chinese Studies Librarians, while analyzing the strategic significance of China-U.S. academic library cooperative alliances. *[Result/Conclusion]* The Chinese librarians' alliance in North America has experienced developmental stages of beginning, maturation, and deepening, evolving from early scattered groups to regional associations, achieving high-level qualitative changes in membership structure, creating deeply integrated professional models, and finally establishing transnational alliances with Chinese libraries to build a strategic pattern of internal-external synergy and two-way mutual benefit.

Keywords: Chinese librarians' alliance; Council on East Asian Libraries; Chinese American Librarians Association; Society for Chinese Studies Librarians; China-U.S. academic libraries alliance

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1. Problem Statement

The Chinese librarians' alliance in North America represents a new group phenomenon that emerged alongside Chinese transnational activities in modern times, composed of Chinese librarians working in various libraries across the United States and Canada. This group, sharing Chinese ancestry and cultural backgrounds, occupies professional and technical positions in library management, resource development, reference services, and Chinese studies. These common characteristics have fostered shared goals and emotional belonging, ultimately promoting the establishment of organizations closely related to Chinese librarians, including the Committee on East Asian Libraries, the Chinese American Librarians Association, the Society for Chinese Studies Librarians, and China-U.S. academic library cooperative alliances.

2. Literature Review

No scholar has yet conducted a comprehensive, systematic examination of the rise, development, and evolution of the Chinese librarians' alliance in North America from a macro perspective. There is an urgent need to establish a holistic research framework that aligns with the alliance's developmental patterns to provide scientific interpretation of its historical evolution, organizational forms, and strategic directions. Existing research both domestically and internationally remains weak. In terms of research content, studies either remain at the level of general description or are limited to single organizations, failing to conduct comprehensive, continuous, long-term examinations and analyses of the alliance's manifestations and significance across different historical periods, and thus unable to present a three-dimensional, dynamic image of the alliance. In terms of research depth, existing studies focus on introducing the background and formation process of the alliance and its organizations, with less exploration of the internal motivations and developmental strategies behind its continuous evolution.

Building upon previous research, this study examines key alliance organizations including the Committee on East Asian Libraries (CEAL), the Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA), and the Society for Chinese Studies Librarians (SCSL), conducting a long-term, holistic discussion of the alliance's formation process, structural evolution, and strategic direction. These three organizations were selected for two reasons: First, they are the most influential organizations where Chinese librarians congregate in large numbers within North American library professional organizations and Chinese community organizations. Second, as representative organizations established during different historical periods of the Chinese librarians' alliance in North America, they clearly delineate the main developmental trajectory from beginning to maturation and then to deepening.

3. Origin and Formation of the Chinese Librarian Group

3.1 Origin of the Chinese Librarian Group in North America

In the late 19th century, with the emergence of Sinology in North America, systematic collection of Chinese books began in the region, and Chinese language collections started to form in research institutions and libraries. In the early stages of North American Sinology, due to the limited number of Chinese documents in each institution and even fewer users, Chinese literature lacked dedicated management and was mostly handled by sinologists who also taught Chinese. In the early 20th century, as Sinology research developed in North America, the accumulating Chinese documents required organization, and demand for relevant talent gradually became apparent. In 1912, Library of Congress Librarian Putnam (H. Putnam) mentioned in the *Report of the Librarian of Congress* that between August 28, 1911 and July 23, 1912, H. K. Fung, a Chinese botanist then employed by the Department of Agriculture, took

the opportunity to search for records of rare plants in Chinese classics for the Department and performed initial classification and cataloging of the Library of Congress's Chinese books [13]. This represents the earliest existing record of Chinese individuals engaged in library professional work in North America.

Subsequently, several Chinese scholars and students in the United States performed sporadic, short-term work at the Library of Congress. For example, during the summer of 1916, Jiang Kanghu, then teaching in the Oriental Studies Department at UC Berkeley, was introduced by American botanist W. Swingle to organize Chinese books at the Library of Congress [14]. If the work of individuals like H. K. Fung and Jiang Kanghu at the Library of Congress was historically contingent, then library science students such as Hong Youfeng, Yuan Tongli, and Li Xiaoyuan constituted a relatively stable early Chinese librarian group in North America with shared characteristics. Between 1920 and 1924, Hong Youfeng [15], Yuan Tongli [16], and Li Xiaoyuan [17], who were studying library science at the New York State Library School, spent multiple summers as interns at the Library of Congress working on Chinese cataloging. With years of library work experience in China and specialized training in library science in the U.S., their internship work demonstrated temporal continuity, professional competence, and task independence, making significant contributions to the early organization of the Library of Congress's Chinese collections.

3.2 Formation of the Chinese Librarian Professional Group

By the late 1920s, Chinese language collections in North America had reached a certain scale, urgently requiring librarians with knowledge of Chinese language, history, and cultural traditions. Chinese individuals began entering major North American libraries to take charge of Chinese literature work full-time. In 1927, Qiu Kaiming was appointed Custodian of Chinese and Japanese Works at Harvard College Library [18], responsible for managing its Chinese and Japanese collections. In 1931, this collection was renamed the Harvard-Yenching Library (hereafter "Harvard-Yenching Library"). As "the first person to serve as a full-time professional director of an East Asian library in the United States based on library science qualifications" [19], Qiu Kaiming recruited many Chinese staff, making Harvard-Yenching Library the institution with the largest number of Chinese librarians at the time and forming a sizable early Chinese librarian group in North America.

During the 1930s and 1940s, besides Qiu Kaiming, the Harvard-Yenching Library's Chinese librarian group included members such as Tian Hongdu, Tang Jihe, Ge Shouyuan, Feng Hanji, Fang Zhaoying, Du Lianzhe, Huang Xinghui, Xu Jialin, Zeng Xiansan, Yu Zhenhuan, Chen Hongshun, Deng Yanlin, Tong Shigang, Yu Shiyu, Xu Liang, Wu Yuanqing, and Liu Kaixian [18]. Some members later dispersed to other East Asian libraries across North America, exerting important influence on East Asian library development, particularly Chinese collection building. Examples include Zeng Xiansan and Xu Liang at the Library of Congress, Tong Shigang and Wu Yuanqing at Princeton University's Gest

Oriental Library, and Fang Zhaoying and Du Lianzhe at East Asian libraries at Stanford, Columbia, and UC Berkeley.

3.3 Foundation for Chinese Librarian Union

Slightly later than Harvard, the Library of Congress established its Division of Chinese Literature in 1928, appointing sinologist Arthur W. Hummel as director. Hummel invited a group of Chinese scholars to work at the Library of Congress, including notable figures such as Wang Wenshan, Fang Zhaoying, Du Lianzhe, Deng Siyu, Wu Guangqing, Zhu Shijia, and Wang Chongmin. During the 1930s and 1940s, other Chinese individuals were appointed as directors of East Asian libraries or Chinese collections at U.S. universities, such as Wang Jizhen at Columbia University [20], Tan Zhuoyuan at the University of Hawaii [21], and Deng Siyu at the University of Chicago [22].

Restricted by the Chinese Exclusion Act, Chinese immigration to North America in the early 20th century remained limited. During this period, the Chinese librarian group consisted primarily of students and exchange librarians from China and Chinese scholars teaching at North American universities, with job responsibilities all related to East Asian collections or Chinese literature. The complex and changing backgrounds of Chinese librarians and the rudimentary nature of East Asian libraries in their formative period determined the instability of the Chinese librarian group in North America during the first half of the 20th century, preventing the emergence of professional organizations to maintain internal group relations. Nevertheless, early East Asian collection institutions represented by the Library of Congress and Harvard-Yenching Library gave birth to the Chinese librarian professional group, laying the foundation for their eventual union.

4. The Alliance's Beginning: Centered on CEAL

4.1 Growth of the Chinese Librarian Workforce

After the mid-20th century, East Asian studies became an important component of American area studies in the postwar period. With the vigorous development of East Asian studies, East Asian collections in North America continuously expanded. Universities including Stanford, Washington, Michigan, UCLA, and Indiana in the U.S., and British Columbia and Toronto in Canada, established East Asian libraries one after another. The demand for librarians with backgrounds in library science or East Asian studies became increasingly urgent. During this period, North American immigration policies toward Chinese people began to loosen, allowing more Chinese to enter North America. Since China had not yet established diplomatic relations with the U.S. and Canada, most Chinese immigrants during this period came from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Southeast Asia.

The number of East Asian library professionals in North America grew continuously under these circumstances. According to Tsuen-hsuei Tsien's survey, the

number of full-time staff at North American East Asian libraries increased from 250 [23] to 409 between 1964 and 1970 [24]. A 1970 survey of Asian-American librarians conducted by Chinese-American scholar T. C. Li showed that librarians from Taiwan and Hong Kong accounted for approximately 70% of respondents [1], suggesting that Chinese librarians constituted the majority of East Asian library professionals before 1970.

4.2 From Early Cooperation to Formal Alliance

Faced with rapidly growing East Asian collections, American East Asian libraries showed clear deficiencies in cataloging and management, resource discovery and utilization, and staff services and training, urgently requiring a specialized organization to coordinate nationwide efforts. Beginning in 1948, the American East Asian library community attempted to establish joint organizations. By the late 1950s, several committees had been formed, including the National Committee on Oriental Collections in the U.S. and Abroad, the Joint Committee of the Far Eastern Association and the American Library Association Oriental Collections, the Committee on Far Eastern Materials of the American Library Association, and the Committee on American Library Resources on the Far East. Under these committees' guidance, East Asian libraries across the U.S. cooperated on unifying East Asian language cataloging standards, establishing a national union catalog of East Asian materials, and conducting staff education and professional training.

In 1967, the Committee on American Library Resources on the Far East was renamed the Committee on East Asian Libraries (CEAL), affiliated with the Association for Asian Studies, and issued its organizational constitution [25]. This constitution clearly defined CEAL's objectives: (1) to provide a platform for scholars and librarians to discuss common issues and library facility improvements; (2) to promote the development of East Asian library resource building and bibliographic control; and (3) to enhance interlibrary and international exchanges and cooperation. The constitution also stipulated membership qualifications and staff terms, making CEAL's operations more institutionalized and standardized. The establishment of CEAL and its constitution in 1967 marked the formal formation of the alliance among East Asian libraries and their professionals in North America.

CEAL possesses dual attributes of both an "academic organization" and a "professional association," directly reflected in its operational management. On one hand, as an academic organization, North American East Asian libraries' emergence is closely related to the rise of Asian studies after World War II. As a library committee under the Association for Asian Studies, CEAL's operations must comply with the association's regulations. On the other hand, as a professional association, North American East Asian libraries are primarily responsible for collecting and managing East Asian language materials (Chinese, Japanese, Korean), which differ significantly from Western language materials in acquisition, cataloging, and utilization. This specialism and professionalism grant

CEAL considerable organizational autonomy, allowing it to establish relatively independent structures and operational models based on its developmental and business needs. CEAL was renamed the Council on East Asian Libraries in 1995, retaining the acronym CEAL, and has played an important role in the development of North American East Asian libraries.

4.3 From Scattered Groups to Regional Association

Although no organization specifically targeting Chinese librarians existed in North America before the 1970s, CEAL, as the formal alliance organization for the North American East Asian library community at the time, admitted many Chinese librarians and was the professional organization with the largest Chinese librarian participation. CEAL's newsletters from 1967 and 1969 [26-27] included two directories listing 90 directors of East Asian collections from American and Canadian institutions, comprising various ethnicities including Chinese, American, Japanese, and Korean. Among them, 45 were Chinese—the largest proportion. These 45 Chinese individuals were all senior administrators in charge of East Asian libraries or collections, including Wu Wenchin (Harvard-Yenching Library), T. H. Tsien (University of Chicago Far Eastern Library), Yu Yueting-ming (UCLA Oriental Library), Wu Kuang-ch'ing (Library of Congress Oriental Division), Tung Shih-kang (Princeton University Far Eastern Library), Tang Te-kong (Columbia University East Asian Library Chinese Collection), Tang Bi-wen (University of Michigan Asia Library Chinese Collection), and in Canada, Wu Tung-chiung (University of British Columbia Library Asian Studies Division) and Chu Wei-hsun (University of Toronto East Asian Research Library). Representing their respective East Asian collection institutions in CEAL's operations, they also served as representatives of Chinese librarian groups within their institutions, leading originally scattered small groups of Chinese librarians toward broader regional association. CEAL thus set the stage for the arrival of independent Chinese librarian alliance organizations after the 1970s.

5. The Alliance's Maturation: Centered on CALA

5.1 Awakening of Civil Rights Consciousness Among Chinese Librarians

After the U.S. passed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, immigration restrictions were continuously lifted, with Canada soon following suit to relax its immigration policies. Following the 1970s, a series of historical events including Canada's establishment of diplomatic relations with China, China's reform and opening-up, and the normalization of China-U.S. relations led to a surge in Chinese immigration to North America. The immigration policies during this period focused on attracting talent with higher education backgrounds or professional skills, so most Chinese immigrants possessed strong educational credentials, solid Chinese cultural backgrounds, and excellent language abilities. The North American library community urgently needed Chinese individuals

with these qualities to meet growing demands in Chinese studies and minority public services. Many students from mainland China entered the North American library profession after graduation, working diligently in professional and technical positions while seeking professional and social recognition. By 1979, the number of Chinese-American librarians in the U.S. had reached over 1,200 [2].

Despite this quantitative growth, as an ethnic minority in North American society, Chinese librarians remained marginalized within the mainstream library community, facing unfair treatment and a series of development challenges [28]. Since the 1960s, civil rights movements represented by the Black Power movement had surged across American society. Influenced by civil rights ideology, on one hand, discriminated Chinese communities began resisting racial discrimination and prejudice, actively seeking equal rights in all areas of American society, leading to the emergence of Chinese community organizations such as the Chinese for Affirmative Action. On the other hand, various minority librarian groups also began speaking out collectively through organizations to gain attention from the mainstream American library community. In this context, Chinese librarians in the U.S. and Canada began seeking deeper group alliances, hoping to oppose racial discrimination and prejudice in North American libraries and jointly protect their legitimate rights and interests in employment and career advancement through independent, united, and mutually supportive forms.

5.2 Formation of Specialized Chinese Librarian Organizations

On March 31, 1973, under the initiative of T. C. Li and others, the first specialized Chinese librarian organization in North America—the Midwest Chinese American Librarians Association (MWCALA)—was established at Rosary College in the U.S., adopting its organizational constitution and electing 11 board members. On June 5 of the same year, MWCALA was registered as a non-profit organization in Illinois [29]. As membership grew and geographic distribution expanded, the association’s fourth annual conference in May 1976 passed the *Constitution of the Chinese American Librarians Association*, renaming the organization the “Chinese American Librarians Association” (CALA), no longer limited to the Midwest but becoming a national organization extending into Canada [7]188.

Shortly after MWCALA’s establishment, another Chinese librarian organization—the Chinese Librarians Association (CLA)—was registered in California in 1974. Due to the convergence of organizational purposes and membership structures, the two associations began merger negotiations in 1976, hoping to establish a strong, unified national Chinese librarian organization. After several years of effort, the two associations officially merged on January 1, 1983. The merged organization retained CLA’s Chinese name “Chinese Librarians Association” and CALA’s English name “Chinese American Librarians Association” [30].

CALA's organizational objectives are: (1) to unite North American Chinese librarians and strengthen exchanges between this group and other librarian communities; (2) to provide a platform for discussing and advancing the professional interests and career development of Chinese librarians; (3) to promote exchanges and cooperation between Chinese and American library communities; and (4) to help Chinese librarians establish cooperative relationships with other relevant organizations and groups [31]. To achieve these missions, the association has established effective management models and operational mechanisms, including board systems, committee systems, chapter systems, and annual conference systems, making numerous efforts to promote Chinese librarians' career development, improve their social status, and protect their equal rights.

As the only specialized Chinese librarian organization in North America, CALA's establishment represents a milestone in the history of the Chinese librarians' alliance, ending Chinese librarians' long-term dependence on CEAL and establishing an independent organizational system, marking the alliance's maturation.

5.3 Qualitative Transformation of Alliance Membership Structure

Another important indicator of the North American Chinese librarians' alliance's maturation after the 1970s was the qualitative change in its membership structure. According to T. C. Li's 1979 survey and Zheng-ye Yang's 1996 survey of Chinese-American librarians (primarily members of CALA and its predecessor organizations), the alliance's membership underwent significant changes in geographic origin, position categories, and institutional distribution between the 1970s and 1990s.

First, in terms of geographic origin, Chinese librarians in the 1970s primarily came from Taiwan and Hong Kong, but by the 1990s, those from mainland China constituted the main body of the alliance—a trend that continues today. Second, regarding position types, cataloging positions dominated in the 1970s, but by the 1990s, reference and user services positions gradually increased, diversifying job categories. Third, in terms of institutional affiliation, Chinese librarians in the 1970s were overly concentrated in university libraries, but by the 1990s, their numbers in public libraries had risen significantly, creating more balanced institutional distribution.

These changes in the Chinese librarian group structure during this period exhibited characteristics of stability, diversification, and balance, indicating that the alliance's membership structure had evolved beyond simple quantitative changes to achieve higher-level qualitative transformation.

6. The Alliance's Deepening: Centered on SCSL

6.1 Development Challenges and Practical Bottlenecks

Entering the 21st century, North America remains the primary destination for Chinese immigration. "From 2000 to 2016, the Chinese population in the United States increased by nearly 75%" [32]. By 2018, among overseas Chinese worldwide, those living in the United States accounted for the highest proportion, followed by Canada, Japan, Australia, and South Korea. Over half of Chinese immigrants in the U.S. work in management, business, science, and arts [33]. According to the American Library Association's 2012 *Diversity Counts* report, there were 10,005 Asian-Pacific American librarians in the U.S. between 2009-2010 [34]. Estimating that Chinese librarians comprise about one-third of Asian-American librarians [35], there were at least 3,000 Chinese-American librarians in the first decade of the 21st century. The number of Chinese librarians in Canada also grew, though more modestly compared to the U.S. According to 2015 CALA membership data, the U.S. accounted for 72.91% of current members, while Canada represented less than 2% [36].

Despite this growth, the group faces numerous challenges and bottlenecks: (1) The massive collection volume and diverse digital resources place considerable pressure on Chinese librarians in document organization and utilization. As of June 2017, North American East Asian collections contained over 11 million Chinese volumes, accounting for more than half of all East Asian print collections [37]. (2) The continuous expansion of East Asian research methods and disciplines, along with rapid information technology development, present new problems and demands for Chinese librarians in resource development and subject services. (3) Cultural background differences create deep-rooted communication barriers, resulting in low promotion rates to senior management positions and serious aging trends, with many bottlenecks remaining in career development paths.

How to break through these practical bottlenecks and explore future development directions constitutes a major issue facing the maturing Chinese librarians' alliance in North America.

6.2 Toward Specialization and Refinement

Since the 21st century, China's growing influence in global political, economic, and cultural affairs has stimulated increasing interest and research on China across North American society. Simultaneously, the number of Chinese faculty and students in North American universities has continued to rise. This growing demand for Chinese studies and teaching has stimulated changes within the North American Chinese librarians' alliance. Some Chinese librarians, based on their subject backgrounds or work needs, have personally engaged in and delved into Chinese studies, constructing a professional identity as Chinese studies librarians and becoming a unique force within the Chinese librarian community. On March 23, 2010, the Society for Chinese Studies Librarians (SCSL) was estab-

lished in Philadelphia [38]. SCSL possesses a formal constitution and complete organizational structure, regularly publishing its journal *Tianlu Luncong*. Its establishment marked the independence of Chinese studies librarians from the broader Chinese librarian group, forming a formal alliance of Chinese studies librarians in North America [12].

SCSL's specialization and refinement are directly reflected in its purpose, organizational model, and operations. The society's mission is "to promote academic activities, professional exchanges, information sharing, and project cooperation among Chinese studies librarians, and to contribute to Chinese studies, particularly research on Chinese literature resources" [39]. Driven by this mission, the society established a relatively complete organizational structure from its inception, with three specialized academic and professional committees: an Academic Committee responsible for conferences and research projects, a Professional Committee responsible for academic exchanges and cooperation, and a Journal Committee responsible for editing, publishing, and distributing *Tianlu Luncong*. This demonstrates the alliance's strong professional and research characteristics. The Chinese studies librarians' alliance developed from the Chinese librarians' alliance, marking further progress toward specialization and refinement.

6.3 Deeply Integrated Professional Model

SCSL members are primarily Chinese librarians at research university East Asian libraries in North America, representing the elite of the contemporary Chinese librarian community. Notable figures include Shao Dongfang, Ma Xiaohu, Zhou Jinping, Zhou Yuan, Li Guoqing, Zheng Liren, Shen Zhijia, Wang Chengzhi, Chen Su, Xu Hong, Yang Tao, and Jiang Shuyong. They serve as both the backbone of East Asian libraries—responsible for collecting, organizing, and managing Chinese literature resources and providing information services for Chinese studies researchers—and as North American Chinese studies experts themselves, possessing relevant subject backgrounds and conducting research on China-related topics. They constitute an important branch of the North American Chinese studies research community.

Chinese studies librarians promote the development of Chinese studies and Chinese cultural heritage in North America through compiling specialized bibliographies, writing monographs, and participating in teaching, establishing a deeply integrated professional model. On one hand, Chinese studies librarians provide not only collection information but also professional guidance for young researchers new to Chinese studies. On the other hand, their relationship with Chinese studies faculty and students transcends the traditional service provider-user dynamic, as they participate as equal members in knowledge production. Therefore, the emergence of Chinese studies librarians has enhanced the group image and professional status of Chinese librarians in North American knowledge production.

7. Building a New Pattern of Internal-External Synergy and Two-Way Mutual Benefit

Driven by the dual factors of “ethnicity + profession,” the North American Chinese librarians’ alliance has, since the 1960s, constructed a network connecting organizations such as CEAL, CALA, and SCSL. This network delineates a strategic developmental trajectory from beginning to maturation to deepening along the historical timeline. Structurally, it also presents different dimensions: (1) In organizational structure, it has clear subjects and distinct levels, forming different types including East Asian library consortia, Chinese librarian professional alliances, and Chinese studies librarian specialized alliances. (2) In organizational function, it emphasizes practical results with different focuses, respectively promoting East Asian library development, advancing Chinese librarian career development and rights protection, and showcasing Chinese librarians’ research capabilities and academic achievements. Although the internal relationship networks of the Chinese librarians’ alliance differ significantly, its core value 诉求 remains consistent: as an ethnic minority in North America, relying on professional platforms, integrating into the library mainstream, improving marginalized status, and enhancing discourse power and influence.

To overcome and counteract the adverse effects of North American racism on Chinese librarians, the alliance has strengthened an integrated community of ethnic, professional, and academic interests locally while simultaneously focusing on China to establish international cooperative alliances with Chinese libraries. Since the 21st century, the most participated external alliance for North American Chinese librarians has been the university library cooperation forum based on collaborative literature resource development. Examples include the China-U.S. Academic Library Cooperation Forum (established 2011), the Global University East Asian Libraries International Forum (established 2012), and the China-U.S. University Chinese Literature Resources Construction Cooperation Forum (established 2013). These forums were jointly initiated by Chinese university libraries and North American Chinese librarian alliance organizations, held regularly and continuously to date, aiming to promote international cooperation in East Asian literature resources.

From 2011 to 2021, six sessions of the China-U.S. Academic Library Cooperation Forum were held, co-sponsored by the China Academic Social Sciences and Humanities Library (CASHL) and SCSL. At the inaugural Global University East Asian Libraries International Forum held at Nanjing University in 2012, participants signed the *Consensus on International Cooperation in East Asian Literature Resources*, announcing the formal establishment of the “East Asian Literature Resources International Cooperation Alliance” with a permanent secretariat at Nanjing University Library and regular international forums and alliance meetings held at member institutions [40]. East Asian libraries and Chinese librarian representatives from Harvard, Chicago, Princeton, Washington, Toronto, and British Columbia are important members of this alliance.

Advocating for the establishment of transnational university library alliances represents an important development strategy adopted by North American Chinese librarians to change their predicament, address challenges, and seek future directions. Following the principle of mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, this strategic alliance can integrate intellectual capital (including human, information, and organizational capital) from both sides to jointly commit to higher-level, more challenging, and higher-quality resource co-development and professional cooperation. The establishment of external alliances has enabled the alliance to evolve toward a transnational knowledge alliance [41] motivated by shared professional concepts and focused on knowledge or technology flow, opening a new chapter of internal-external synergy and two-way mutual benefit.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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