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# The Value of Intellectual Freedom in Twenty-First-Century China: Changes, Challenges, and Progress

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## ABSTRACT

The American Library Association's (ALA) "Core Values of Librarianship" (2004) serves as an important vehicle in introducing and creating cross-cultural dialogues on values such as intellectual freedom with countries where there are starkly different political views and cultural ideas. This paper positions the Core Value of *Intellectual Freedom* within the historical context of China. How has the ALA fostered a culture of intellectual freedom in this country? Since the advent of the Cultural Revolution in China during the 1960s, censorship has been severely imposed on all levels of society. Libraries were burned, shut down, or forced to adapt to changes in beliefs and policies that promoted the ideas and values of Chairman Mao Zedong, the leader of the Revolution. In contrast, decades after recovering from the Revolution in the twenty-first century, libraries in China are flourishing, with rich print and digital collections and special services in the face of varying degrees of governmental censorship. Using memoirs, travel papers, and essays written about China's libraries, the paper traces and analyzes the historical development of China's censorship policies in relation to Intellectual Freedom, and emphasizes how this Core Value still plays a vital role in the country today through international library cooperation and Sino-American partnership universities.

## INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in 1876, the American Library Association (ALA) has become one of the most prominent associations devoted to promoting and supporting libraries and library education in the United States and worldwide. Over the course of the Association's history, it has developed

and advocated for key political positions. One of the most significant values that the ALA supports is *Intellectual Freedom*. In its “Core Values of Librarianship,” the ALA states that “we uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources” (American Library Association, 2004, n.p.). In its *Intellectual Freedom Manual* (2010b) the ALA affirms that censorship and anti-intellectual freedom in all aspects of librarianship are challenges that need to be discouraged in the United States and abroad. Intellectual Freedom as an ALA Core Value is an important fundamental component of modern librarianship and can guide the profession to address and combat censorship both at home and abroad. To promote the concept of Intellectual Freedom in the profession, the ALA established the Intellectual Freedom Committee in 1940, and then the Office for Intellectual Freedom in 1976, to reinforce the Core Value and educate librarians and the general public about the importance of it. The Association defines Intellectual Freedom as “the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored” (2007, n.p.). Through its advocacy, the ALA has introduced a variety of conversations, programs, and celebrations of the freedom to read and ultimately discourage censorship locally, nationally, and internationally.

Intellectual Freedom is paramount in the ALA’s mission; indeed, five out of six articles of the “Library Bill of Rights” refers to intellectual freedom and its opposition to censorship (Knox, 2014). According to Emily Knox, “The principle upholding intellectual freedom and opposing censorship is codified within the profession” (p. 9). It is reflected in such longstanding statements and causes like the “Freedom to Read” statement adopted in 1953, which supports individuals’ right to intellectual freedom and freedom of expression. Many other organizations have adopted a freedom-to-read statement where intellectual freedom is articulated as an essential aspect of democracy. For other important Core Values of librarianship, such as Democracy, Diversity, and Social Responsibility, the ALA continues to shape and enforce these Values through its statements, policies, programs, and deliverance. Most importantly, librarians who are educated under ALA-accredited programs in the United States and Canada play a significant role as ambassadors to actively disseminate these principles through papers, presentations, conferences, and any other kinds of intellectual or political exchanges. Knox writes that “the indoctrination of support for intellectual freedom is a major part of library school education throughout the United States” (p. 9). The curricula of ALA-accredited graduate programs offer vital training on and understanding of the foundation of librarianship, which is built on the collective Core Values of Service, Intellectual Freedom, Professionalism, and so on.

Complementing the ALA's many statements on its Core Value of Intellectual Freedom is the International Federation of Library Associations' (IFLA) statement on intellectual freedom, approved in 1999. IFLA "supports, defends, and promotes intellectual freedom as defined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (International Federation of Library Associations, 1999). Like the ALA, IFLA also recognizes freedom of expression and the privacy of the library user, and it strongly emphasizes that librarians must uphold these values as well. The ALA's Core Values, particularly in the case of Intellectual Freedom, can also play a role internationally by serving as a vehicle for introducing and promoting cross-cultural dialogues about these concepts with nations that have different political views and cultural ideas on accessing information.

In this paper the ALA's Core Value of Intellectual Freedom is positioned in an international context: the historical developments of this concept in the libraries of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Today, China is one of the fastest-growing and most populated countries in the world, but it is also undergoing a crisis in regard to censorship and limitations in accessing information in the digital world. Known for its rich and turbulent history, the country has gone through major political and cultural shifts over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, such as the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). This paper frames the ALA Core Value of Intellectual Freedom as a means to understand China's progress in adopting such a concept in a society known for its restrictions and censorship and examines how the ALA has helped foster a culture of intellectual freedom in the country. Using memoirs, travel papers, newsletters, and essays written about China's libraries, the paper traces and analyzes the historical development of China's censorship policies in relation to intellectual freedom and emphasizes how the ALA can still play a vital role in the country today through various indirect and direct approaches: for example, international library cooperation and innovative developments in higher education, such as the establishments of new global and joint-ventured universities in China.

Along with other China–U.S. library collaborations, new joint-ventured academic institutions in China can instill an active dialogue with the Chinese government locally and nationally in discussing the importance of academic and intellectual freedom in society as a whole. The ALA's Core Values, particularly Intellectual Freedom, can trigger social and political progress in the libraries in China. Libraries can embrace and adopt these Core Values as frameworks to build and support access to information as a global right for their patrons despite the laws in their countries. From the other side of the world, in the United States we find that the ALA's Core Values are globally important to foster change and progress in countries with different political landscapes. The ALA and its designation of Intellectual Freedom as a Core Value are influential and represent the rights

of all citizens to access information regardless of geographic location. Libraries across land and sea share common values and ideas, and the ALA's Core Values offer opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue and collaboration. Librarians in other countries may see possibilities within this case study on China to build and uphold the ALA's Core Values through various collaborative approaches.

### THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND CENSORSHIP IN CHINA

China has a long history of political censorship; starting in the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE), rulers added and imposed censorship provisions to regulate society. In the dynasties that followed, different levels of censorship laws were introduced, which continued into the twentieth century. When the communists, under the leadership of Mao Zedong, formed the PRC in 1949, they maintained a political censorship that can be understood in three ways: “to retain power, to maintain community standards and to protect dogma—in this case, Maoist dogma” (Caso, 2009, p. 56). One of the defining features of a totalitarian regime is to control access to information. This feature became evident during the height of censorship in 1966, when Mao called for a drastic political reform known as the Cultural Revolution throughout the country, as described Zhengyuan Fu's *Autocratic Tradition and Chinese Politics* (1993), which provides a detailed account of the political culture of China at the time. During this revolutionary period spanning ten years, Mao launched a campaign for the masses to destroy materials, relics, records, or any tangible objects that had ideological representations that were contrary to the beliefs of the Revolution—that is, communism and Maoism. Records that were tossed into blazing fires included ancient and foreign books and archival documents, since these materials challenged the legitimacy of the communist regime (Bosmajian, 2006; Polastron, 2007). These collections also embodied China's imperial legacy and colonial history under the Qing and the West, which ridiculed China's true sovereignty, according to Mao. The destruction was not limited to books, but also included people. Scholars and intellectuals were often treated as criminals and viewed as political threats to the Revolution; many fled the country or were forced to work in rural farmlands as punishment.

In 1950 an editorial in the *New York Times* explored the book-burning practice in the communist regime: “The logic is that if the ideas do not exist physically, they will not exist in any other way” (“Mao Burns the Books”). There was, of course, an error in this logic, as the editorial points out: “An idea does not have to be printed or recorded to be influential or potent.” In other words, printed materials are not the only type of sources to disseminate information; people have other ways to retain or spread ideas without using them. Throughout Mao's campaign against books, only works by Marx, Lenin, and himself were permitted to be read in pub-

lic spaces. From 1966 to 1969 he ordered the destruction of books that contained any of the “four old ideas”: “old religious practices, old superstitions, old festivals, old social practices such as weddings and funerals, and old ways of dress” (Tillman, 1971). Any visual evidence of these ideas was swiftly discarded by the loyal Red Guards under the command of the regime. These guards were often individuals in their teens or twenties who supported the Communist Party and the mass movement of the Cultural Revolution by leading protests and monitoring public activities on behalf of the party. Censorship in China was at its zenith during this period.

Libraries also shared the same fate as books. During the Revolution “all libraries were closed for various lengths of time between the years of 1966 and 1970” (Ting, 1983, p. 148). Some public and academic libraries were immediately destroyed or forced to permanently shut down; those that stayed open were transformed into “Maoism propaganda station[s]” (p. 148). The stacks and shelves were inundated with works by leading communist authors and Mao himself, such as *Quotations*—also known as “The Little Red Book.” Having these books on the shelves radically reduced the number of users of the libraries because people already possessed these in their homes. Other books were removed from the stacks immediately. In a memoir, writer Jung Chang (1991, p. 368) recalls that “if books had a library stamp in them, most people shunned them.” People did not want to be labeled as a “counterrevolutionary.” According to Mao, “whoever sides with revolutionary people is a revolutionary. Whoever sides with imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism is a counterrevolutionary” (Zedong, 1972, p. 14). This was true for those who chose to read this type of literature. The Red Guards supporting the Cultural Revolution searched for and destroyed any revisionist, intellectual, and counter-revolutionary books and their readers. The freedom to read and think in public was severely restricted based on the cultural climate of Maoism. Librarians themselves were “giving the technical treatment by cutting off or blackening out undesirable parts of these books or journals” (Ting, 1983, p. 149). Many rare books were “regarded as ‘old culture,’ and were sent to garbage dumps, warehouses, or paper mills to be recycled and made into paper to print Chairman Mao’s ‘Little Red Book’” (p. 147). The only “rare” books that were stored in libraries were writings by Mao and Marx.

In *Quotations* there is a section called “Serving the People.” This theme was echoed throughout China as an important service philosophy. The political message channels the notion that the general masses or people who support the Revolution are the “force” of the country: they included farmers, peasants, workers, soldiers, and anyone from the poor and lower classes. Anyone who was a landlord, merchant, bourgeois elite, or capitalist was treated differently and had to embrace communism and demonstrate their allegiance to the cause by changing their attitudes or giving up possessions. Barbara Tuchman, a journalist who traveled to China during

this turbulent period, wrote a memoir titled *Notes from China* (1972) in which she explores how the message came across to millions of people, and how they were really the “motive force” behind these changes to support Mao and the Cultural Revolution (p. 4). Her memoir provides an outsider’s perspective of the internal shifts going on within the country that few outsiders witnessed.

“Serving the People” was also introduced and enforced in Chinese libraries. In the early 1970s, librarians from various countries, such as the United States and Australia, were able to send librarian representatives to explore the cultural shifts in Chinese libraries. These librarians witnessed firsthand how the collections were developed, librarians were trained, and libraries operated. The Cultural Revolution changed the structure of the libraries in all directions. However, there was a growing interest in promoting exchanges and collaborations among different libraries, even at this stage. These vital exchanges served to incubate discussions and conversations about collections, services, and values of librarianship and the profession cross-culturally.

In the midst of the Revolution, from May 28 to June 18, 1972, Enid Bishop, an Australian librarian from the Australian National University Library, made a trip to China to visit various libraries because she was accepted into an exchange program in which a group of Australians were allowed to travel to China. Bishop revealed that there was limited information and sources about Chinese libraries and librarians at that time. Her travel account, “University Libraries in China: Some Personal Observations” (1974), reveals actual restrictions accessing Chinese libraries more than the other two accounts (which will be addressed later). Bishop wanted to see a technical library outside of Canton, a southern province in China, but she was denied access; she also wanted to make a “casual visit to a local public library in Canton but was refused entry as [she] did not have an identification card” (p. 26). In her visit to the library at Liao-ning University, she noted that there were a few recent Western titles, including ones from Australia, but wrote that due to limited funds, the library could not purchase many Western sources. In other Chinese universities there were retrospective Chinese materials and strong foreign-language collections. Bishop also reported that there were not many professionally trained librarians in university libraries, and that they were also underpaid. She concluded that the personal contacts she had made could be helpful in maintaining professional relationships with these Chinese libraries.

In another account, from August 11 to 23, 1972, the chief librarian of the National Library of Australia, S. W. Wang, traveled to China and compiled a report of his trip to various cities and libraries. Like the other visitors, he observed that the popular slogan “Serve the People” could be seen in front of every building in China. The quotation reinforced the notion that the Revolution was created to overthrow the old systems and

reform every aspect of a society plagued with regressive ideologies, including the four old ideas. Wang (1974) wrote that in the two libraries he visited, there were reading rooms to promote the study of Marxism, Leninism, and Maoist thought. During his trip he was told that “librarians were either trained by their own library training schools or recruited from the two library schools in the Universities of Peking and Wuhan respectively” (p. 21). Compared to other visitors’ reports, Wang did not write much on the censorship of the collections, but noted that there was an abundance of collections on political writings by Mao. Regarding foreign literature, he wrote that in the Shanghai library, “the division of responsibilities for collecting foreign books has been carefully worked out” (p. 21). The collection policy in public libraries was also fundamentally shaped by the politics of the Revolution, since much foreign and classical literatures were banned because they were contrary to its ideology. Wang’s trip offered a personal glimpse of libraries during the latter stage of the Revolution and concluded that they were eager to serve the needs of all the people to fulfill its service philosophy in the country.

Another insightful travel account on China during this period came from Josephine Fang, a professor of library science at Simmons College in Boston who visited different kinds of libraries from August 1 to September 4, 1974. She noted that “no systematic study of libraries serving the country with the largest population in the world, an estimated 800 million people, has been made and only occasional reports from visitors are available” (1975, p. 744). Similar to Wang’s trip, Fang visited various cities and libraries throughout the country and observed that the collections were often reflective of the political reality in China because there were plenty of printed materials that supported the ideologies of the Cultural Revolution, such as communism and Marxism. There were also rare and foreign books available, such as the first edition of *Das Kapital*, in the national library—a book of paramount importance to Maoist thought and hence one of the few foreign ones allowed to be preserved and read. According to Fang’s report, the national library had “over 2.8 million volumes which includes some 800,000 books in foreign languages” (p. 747). She does not, however, present enough detail about these foreign-language materials so as to properly identify them; these numbers may be true, but it is not certain what kind of foreign-language books were available in the library at the time. Fang also described the political reading rooms that were dedicated to the works of Marx and Mao in various libraries. In her account Fang concluded that the most important part of this trip was “the contact made with individual librarians and the communication established which should lead to the exchanges so vital to our global profession” (p. 749). This last remark highlights the significance of establishing cross-cultural relationships and her belief in the importance of international communications.

What do these personal accounts reveal to us? During this period Chinese libraries and librarians experienced political and cultural changes that greatly impacted their collections, services, and personnel. Through these writings, it was evident that the notion of intellectual freedom was a threat to China's political developments, and in order to preserve the tradition of Maosim, censorship was strictly enforced to regulate ideas and knowledge in Chinese society. However, as the Revolution was coming to an end, librarians saw the opportunity to rebuild their libraries and collections and were eager to collaborate with other librarians, such as those from the United States and Australia, to expand resources and services. With the end of the Revolution, the need to "modernize" society, including libraries, became apparent after Mao's death in 1976. From 1978 to 1992, economic and political reforms were implemented in every sector of society under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping. Chinese libraries are much more open now than during the revolutionary days; still, some of today's restrictions on intellectual freedom in the country continue to reflect the legacy of the Cultural Revolution.

#### INTERNATIONALIZING INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM IN CHINA

After the Revolution ended in 1976, libraries were no longer feared to be storehouses for "poisonous weeds"—a term Mao often used to describe objects like books that were against his beliefs. Libraries were again viewed as important institutions to "reeducate" the masses and reform scientific research: "The function of the Chinese library has again been defined as serving the following: mass education, scientific research, dissemination of information and preservation of books" (Zhensheng, 2003, p. 151). The images of libraries and books became more acceptable to Chinese communists' eyes; thus many libraries attempted to rebuild their collections and restore their services to the public. A 1979 article in *Library Journal*, "Libraries in China Today," noted that "the end of the Cultural Revolution signaled fundamental changes in policies and attitudes towards library development in the People's Republic of China" (p. 1301). Unlike Mao, Deng was open to recognizing and raising China's economic status and development. However, despite these changes, intellectual freedom remained relatively scarce within the country. The government's censorship policy remained in force; the people could not criticize nor challenge the government. For example, student demonstrations in 1976, 1986, and 1989 were brutally repressed. Evidence of these restrictions in intellectual freedom in China can be found in the following two articles of the country's constitution, adopted in December 1982:

- Article 22: The state promotes the development of literature and art, the press, broadcasting and television undertakings, publishing and distribution services, libraries, museums, cultural centers and other cultural



undertakings, that serve the people and socialism and sponsors mass cultural activities.

- Article 51: The exercise by citizens of the People's Republic of China of their freedoms and rights may not infringe upon the interests of the state, of society, and of the collective, or upon the lawful freedoms and rights of other citizens. (Caso, 2009, p. 69)

These two articles provide insight into the Chinese government's ability to determine what is appropriate to distribute, since it is in charge of the production, management, and dissemination of information. Based on these, the interest of the state is paramount and citizens cannot contradict or challenge its laws and policies. However, people found other ways to advance their rights of access to information without challenging or undermining the authority of the government.

*Building Library Organizations for Support*

One of the most important ways that the ALA has supported and advocated for the value of intellectual freedom in China is to endorse an organization that actively pursues collaborations and cross-cultural dialogue with the country: the Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA). Through a series of discussions and reorganizations among the leaders of this organization, the "Mid-West Chinese American Librarians Association was formally established" in 1973, and "another Chinese American Librarians Association was formed in 1974. . . . [T]he two organizations merged in 1983 under the name of CALA" (Liu, 2001, p. 55). CALA is currently the largest Asian American professional library association, with over 700 members, and is an active affiliate of the ALA. As an affiliate, "CALA takes an active part in ALA activities in general, with a special interest in its diversity programs. CALA has representatives in the ALA Council, the Diversity Council, and the Spectrum Steering Committee" (p. 56). The ALA considers CALA as an affiliate organization under associations of ethnic librarians, which share similar purposes and interests with the ALA and may receive sponsorships from it in conferences and other forms of support. CALA was formed because Chinese American librarians "felt that ALA did not adequately represent them, did not provide opportunities for them to participate in decision making and were too slow and tentative in responding to their needs. They needed an official professional organization to assist in fighting for fair treatment in recruitment, retention and promotion in American libraries" (p. 55). Thus CALA was formed. Its mission statement focuses on establishing and supporting communications between Chinese American and American libraries by providing a forum to discuss professional issues and promote the exchange of ideas among librarians in the United States, China, and elsewhere.

The travel reports of librarians who visited China in the early 1970s

offer a view of its libraries and how there was a strong need for international exchanges and collaborations between the country and the West. The ALA's involvement in China could not be fully realized without the formation of CALA and its being the active mediator to address library-related issues. For example, during the 1989 student protests in Beijing, CALA played a role in supporting intellectual freedom within the country, which is apparent in its newsletter of June 1990. Regarding *productivity*, it stated that

CALA supports the concept of information access as critical to international productivity and calls for the development of international information policies defining the productivity support role of information resources and services, especially in addressing the increasingly serious global threats to the environment and to the economic development of emerging nations. (Chinese American Librarians Association, 1990, p. 1)

In the newsletter, the Association affirmed its support of democracy and the freedom to access information, especially during a "time in which recent actions by the government of the People's Republic of China threaten to suppress the flow and interchange of ideas, information and knowledge regarding political and social events within China" (p. 1). In response CALA led a series of planning programs for the ALA-affiliate associations to support these initiatives and positions that the ALA endorsed.

In the past and today, CALA plays an instrumental role in preserving the ALA's Core Value of Intellectual Freedom through dialogue and solidarity with and among Chinese librarians. In many of its newsletters since 1984, CALA has offered to send books to China, establish rapport with librarians in the country, and promote seminars and librarian exchanges between the United States and China. With over 500 members from around the world, CALA is one of the key ways of preserving and disseminating intellectual freedom in China.

The challenge of fostering this Core Value is evident in Chinese society as a whole. As Conghui Fang (2013, p. 55) explains, "For a long time in China, the discussions on values or value systems have been constrained by ideology. Discussions on such topics kept subtle relationship with the political environment of the time." Political and social interests are closely linked. More importantly, unlike the West, implementing ideas into practice requires government approval or needs to be reflective of its policies. International exchanges or dialogue must also occur at higher levels to pave the way for libraries in China to openly promote and endorse this value; this need is evident in the joint ventures and partnerships between leading universities in China and the United States that are presently being implemented.

Today China is one of the fastest developing countries in the world. While it is becoming more involved in global affairs and more open to

the system of capitalism, the Chinese government still closely scrutinizes public debates and maintains strict censorship on the internet, which is an ongoing struggle for both the government and its citizens as vast amounts of information is being produced, disseminated, and interpreted online. Criticism of the government or the Communist Party is often regulated and suppressed. This level of scrutiny has had an impact on academic freedom, which is a very sensitive topic in China.

How has the ALA and its advocacy of the Core Value of Intellectual Freedom engaged with the repression of academic freedom in China? This question may be addressed through explorations of global partnerships in higher education. In this age of globalization, more U.S. universities are seizing opportunities to establish global campuses and study-abroad sites in China for their students and faculty. China is opening its doors to allow universities to create educational partnerships for international exchange programs. In most cases, local, regional, and national governments are sponsoring these initiatives to establish an international higher education system in their cities. Culturally, these initiatives allow U.S. students to explore a rising nation like China from an immersive academic experience; additionally, China can enhance its educational reputation by increasing the number of international students studying in its schools. Usually, both Chinese and non-Chinese students, including Americans, can study in these new universities to develop cross-cultural learning experiences.

Examples of these global initiatives include New York University Shanghai (NYU Shanghai) and Duke-Kunshan University. The former, the first joint Sino-American academic university (New York University and East China Normal University) is located in Shanghai, where there are more opportunities for discussions on intellectual and academic freedom. According to its alumni website, "The creation of NYU Shanghai marks a major step in China's higher education reform. It is the first such university to receive the approval and support of the Ministry of Education along with the Shanghai Municipal Government and the first to be established in a major Chinese city" (Jannuzzi, 2013, n.p.). Duke-Kunshan University, a nonprofit, joint-venture institution between Duke and Wuhan universities, was also approved by China's Ministry of Education, in 2013 (Duke-Kunshan University, n.d.). Both of these Sino-American partnerships enjoy the freedom of academic research and may offer ways to expand and promote academic freedom in Chinese universities and intellectual freedom across the country in the future.

While these Sino-American partnerships appear positive, recent criticisms of them have arisen because they are located in a country strongly opposed to freedom of expression and are operating in the interests of generating capital. But it is important to note that these two universities have the opportunity to promote and incubate intercultural dialogue on intellectual freedom within their respective host communities. These uni-

versities are upholding the principle of academic freedom on campuses in a country that may not permit it in other institutions. This fostering of academic freedom was recently demonstrated when faculty members of NYU Shanghai organized a forum to discuss current events in China, such as the pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong that have been censored in the Chinese media (Farrar, 2015).

In another example, Sino-American universities have opened their library collections for research and teaching purposes; extensive print and electronic resources covering various disciplines being made available to students and faculty. These institutions' librarians are required to be ALA-accredited or to have an equivalent degree. Based on these developments, it appears that librarians, because of their library school training, can play a major role in supporting and fostering intellectual freedom. NYU Shanghai's library offers full access to all its databases in its main campus in New York City, which allows students and faculty to conduct research on virtually any topic. Most importantly, librarians are available to support their research needs as well.

In these examples of Sino-American universities it is apparent that the ALA indirectly influences U.S. university libraries and has had some influence on Chinese ones through various approaches, such as organizing and hosting Chinese librarian delegations at its conferences through CALA and the ALA's International Relations Round Table. By these means librarians from China have the opportunity to learn about American libraries' service philosophies, programs, and ideas.

Another way for American libraries to foster the ALA's Core Values is to sponsor meetings with consortia of public and academic libraries in China. Conceptually, this is one approach to promote discussion on how American university libraries in China are supporting an environment in which intellectual freedom can thrive. This interaction with Chinese librarians allows them to explore and understand these different possibilities. However, it remains a challenge for the ALA to foster change in Chinese libraries because of their different cultural context. As Conghui Fang (2013, p. 56) explains: "Ideas in China cannot be put into practice rapidly without being promoted by governmental policies. It is hardly possible to build up and practice a library's core value until the society's core value system has been created." Thus there is a certain level of resistance in integrating international core values, such as those of the ALA, because they require the government's consent and provision. However, recently published articles are suggesting that libraries in China are beginning to be receptive to these values. A statistical analysis in 2007 found that the most frequent keywords in international core-value papers in China were *service/work, information/knowledge/thoughts, profession/group/employee, access/use/provide/reading, and free/open/equality* (p. 61). These kinds of scholarly publications foster dialogue and the understanding of core values like the ALA's,

and how Chinese libraries can adopt them as frameworks for their own values.

The ALA can also have a direct influence on librarians working in American university libraries in China. Since 1982, every September there is an international event known as the “Banned Books Week” that promotes banned books and recognizes the importance of the freedom to read. Many public, school, and academic libraries promote the event in their programs because it is sponsored by the ALA. During Banned Books Week, librarians organize events in which patrons can read aloud their favorite banned book or discuss why books are banned in society. In September 2014 the librarians of NYU Shanghai sponsored, for the first time, an event to promote banned or threatened books. During the event, students learned more about books that have been challenged or banned in the United States and/or Europe (National Coalition against Censorship, 2014). This occasion allowed students to gain a deeper understanding of the philosophical nature of intellectual freedom and censorship within an international context.

The librarians who received their graduate degrees from an ALA-accredited program have been trained to know and discuss the effects of banned books and censorship on society. This kind of passive influence from the ALA is an important force to disseminate its Core Value of Intellectual Freedom regardless of location, as shown above. The ALA endorses intellectual freedom worldwide and states in its “International Relations” policy manual that it “encourages the exchange, dissemination, and access to information and the unrestricted flow of library materials in all formats throughout the world” (ALA, 2010a, n.p.). Creating an event that celebrates banned books in a country known for censorship is a step toward opening up that society and fostering awareness and discussion of the ALA’s Core Value of Intellectual Freedom. The ALA degree provides librarians with a better foundation and understanding of this Core Value and why it is important and necessary for society beyond the library.

The future of these joint-venture universities remains to be seen, as it is often difficult to predict and assess the success of startups and partnerships. We see that this Core Value of Intellectual Freedom will endure but will continue to be contested in China. However, we also know that in a country with strong censorship policies, it is possible to encourage cross-cultural dialogue on key issues and values such as intellectual freedom through programming, awareness, dialogue, and international conferences and exchanges.

## CONCLUSION

It is difficult to foresee how a developing nation-state can change its legal standing and position in public policies. As history demonstrates, China has been through political and cultural shifts in regard to the Core Value

of Intellectual Freedom. Since 1966 the library in China has endured a series of turbulent events that affect its understanding of the freedom of information. However, Chinese librarians have played a critical role in disseminating, monitoring, and promoting the freedom to access information, even while at the same time *they* were the ones censoring, protecting, and promoting books within historical and international contexts. In the *Encyclopedia of Library History*, Jean Preer (1994) writes in the section on censorship: "Librarians work in the eye of the cultural storm of changing societies, values and technology. As they have evolved as a profession, so too has their commitment to resisting censorship and to providing access to information in its varied dimensions" (p. 123). In order to continue combating censorship, librarians are needed to safeguard intellectual freedom. Professional librarians with ALA-accredited degrees possess the social and professional responsibility to disseminate the ALA's Core Values, whether at international library conferences or through cooperation organized by CALA, ALA, IFLA, and other groups. Librarians should recognize the significance of the impact of censorship in society and always be aware of the need to create or maintain cross-cultural dialogue with others who are unfamiliar with the effects and ramifications of limited access to information.

In this age of globalization, higher education has also taken the opportunity to collaborate on new startup universities in countries where ideas and values can be contrary to each other. With American universities offering to create dialogues that support and protect the freedom of academic expression, these collaborations also foster intellectual freedom. Chinese and U.S. librarians must continue their dialogue and learn from each other. Libraries in other countries that are facing political threats similar to China's can also create dialogues, collaborations, and exchanges around the ALA's Core Values, learning that it is possible to engage in different levels of interactions and gain support from the ALA groups to counter the issues that threaten access to information and intellectual freedom.

This case study of China shows that the ALA's Core Values can still be fostered in a country with heavy-handed censorship, and that the Association has set a standard for librarians worldwide to protect and encourage the rights of access to information. Additionally, international library cooperation and innovative university partnerships provide hope in China and other countries with political constraints to rethink and reshape its views, policies, values, and ideas in ways that support the rights for all people to freely read, write, and think. The need to preserve the ALA's Core Value of Intellectual Freedom is ever more important as the world becomes more digital, technological, information based, and knowledge based. The ALA's Core Values will continue to play a global role in slowly transforming societies to understand and embrace intellectual freedom.

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