

# Chinese Name Authority in China

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### **1. CNMARC Format and Bibliographic Records for Chinese Books**

The “China MARC Format” was drafted in 1986 based on the “UNIMARC Handbook 1983” and our own cataloging practices. In 1988, CNMARC records were distributed to China’s local libraries by National Library of China (NLC). According to the “UNIMARC Manual 1987” and the opinions of experts, the format was revised in 1988 and was officially published in early 1990. In addition, the “China MARC Format Manual” was compiled in 1994 according to the “UNIMARC Manual 1994” and our year’s experience in this field.

The “China MARC Format” has been approved as the culture professional standard by the Culture Ministry of China in 1996 (WH/T0503-96), and the format are being used nationwide for bibliographic data exchange at present. Up to now, the NLC has collected over a million of CNMARC records for Chinese books since 1949.

However, we found out that these bibliographic records some time differ greatly with each other in descriptions, especially there is no name authority control. This will surely hinder the users from searching and bibliographic resource sharing.

### **2. China MARC Format / Authorities and Authority Records**

With the development of the library automation in China, the libraries in our country have attached great importance to authority control. As late as in 1989, the NLC began to carry out the study on authority data under the patronage of the Culture Ministry. In accordance with our traditional practices and the actual situation, the following two drafts have been

worked out:

- 1) "Description Rule for Authority Data Entries", completed in 1990, based on the "Guidelines for Authority and Reference Entries 1984".
- 2) "China MARC Format / Authorities 1990" (trial edition), based on the "UNIMARC / Authorities 1991".

The above two drafts were revised in 1998 and will be approved as culture professional standard by the Culture Ministry of China. As both of the above standards are drafted in line with international standards and at the same time integrate with Chinese book cataloging practice, they can not only satisfy the needs of the libraries in our country for building Chinese authority records, but also can ensure Chinese authority data to be exchanged in China and abroad smoothly.

Till now the NLC has distributed nearly 300,000 name authority records and more than 100,000 subject authority records to the whole nation. Its computer cataloging system with authority control function is in the process of development.

### **3. Production of Name Authority Records in China**

In 1995, the Name Authority Section under acquisition and cataloging department was established in National Library of China. This Section is specially for the authority control research and production of Chinese name authority records. It has developed an independent name authority system for building Chinese authority records. During the previous years, the Section has revised "Description Rule for Authority Data Entries" two times with their practical experience. They also conduct nationwide training course three times for promoting authority control in cataloging of Chinese book. So far, this Section has produced nearly 300,000 name authority records and distributed them to other libraries home and abroad.

Name authority includes personal name, corporate body name and uniform title. In the database there are three kinds of record type: authority entry record, reference entry record and general explanatory entry record.

In addition, there are some other libraries in China also build name authority record and maintain their own name authority database in the cataloging systems.

### **4. Use of Name Authority Records in China**

As everybody knows, authority control is such a process that in which bibliographic headings must be unique and consistent, while the authority files must be created, used and maintained at the same time. So I should say, our authority work is just at the first stage. The number of Chinese name authority records is still not fully used in cataloging process right now. Although some libraries in China have already used our Chinese

name authority data in their cataloging systems and maintain their own name authority files, however, viewing the situation as a whole, the bibliographic authority work in our country is still lack of qualified basis. Some of our colleagues should have a better understanding on authority control and name authority. We still have a long way to go.

In order to implement name and subject authority control in the Chinese book cataloging, National library of China has initiated a new project this year, which includes the following contents:

- 1) developing Chinese book cataloging system with authority control function;
- 2) re-organizing Chinese book cataloging process in four steps:
  - description of books
  - name authority and name authority file maintenance
  - subject authority and subject authority file maintenance
  - catalogue organization

The above is the brief introduction of the development of Chinese name authority in China.

Thank you for your attention.