

***MEDICAL LIBRARIANSHIP IN CHINA: CHINA BETWEEN
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND THE DEVELOP-
MENT OF INFORMATION NETWORKS***

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INTRODUCTION

**PRESENTATION OF THE SECTION OF BIOLOGICAL AND MEDICAL
SCIENCES LIBRARIES OF IFLA**

The Section was set up in 1978 in order to respond to the growing needs of an international medical librarian community: IFLA, as a recognized international organization, gives permanency, continuity and is a strong link amongst librarians worldwide.

The Biomedical Section is one of the five sections that form the Division of Special Libraries within IFLA. The members must be nominated by Associations members of IFLA: the committee is elected every two years to promote the work of the Section. A representation from the World Health Organization and the US National Library of Medicine or other relevant bodies is included.

One of the main tasks of the Section is to be part of the organization of the International Congress of Medical Librarianship (ICML) every four years, choosing for example the location: the next 8th ICML will be held in London, in the year 2000. The provision of an annual program by the Section is an ongoing responsibility of the Section's Executive: it is a unique opportunity to learn about medical library developments in a particular or cultural context. It is a real help to develop library contacts.

The Section plays a strong role in maintaining contacts amongst medical librarians on a worldwide scale. The Sections's Newsletter is the link between the members and it is now on Internet, accessible through the IFLA server, IFLANET (<http://www.nlc-bnc.ca.ifla>).

In summary, belonging to the Section of Medical and Biological Sciences Libraries is an opportunity to participate to an open forum for international discussion and cooperation, to share specialised expertise and seek solutions to global library problems.

EAST MEETS WEST IN MEDICAL LIBRARIANSHIP

The 62th Beijing IFLA Conference on August 1996 was a great moment for the Section of Biological and Medical Sciences. It was the first time that an IFLA meeting was held in China, and the idea of organizing an encounter between colleagues from East and West was a kind of challenge. And it was successful: eight papers were given during the Open Session Program under the main theme of *East meets West in Medical Librarianship* on several aspects of medicine, biotechnology and agriculture in China, with a topic on international cooperation between Canada and China and the access to biomedical Chinese medical information from the West. In conclusion, a point of view on professional perspectives was presented.

Then, in addition to the Open Sessions a workshop on *Traditional Chinese Medicine* gave a unique opportunity to Western colleagues to understand what represents tradition, medicine and cares coming the oldest ages.

As Chair of the Section, and on behalf of the Section of Biological and Medical Sciences, let me give a special thanks to our Chinese colleagues who gave us such a warm welcome and to all members who contributed with their usual efficiency to the work of our Section.

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