

Transform and Upgrade to Meet Challenges and Stay True to the Original Mission to Set Out Again —— China's Archives' Actions in the New Era

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Ladies and gentlemen, fellow archivists:

Since the 21st century, with the emergence and widespread application of science and technology such as Internet of Things, Cloud Computing, Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Deep Learning and so on, the real world and the virtual digital world in which we live have increasingly converged and merged. Opening and sharing have become the general consensus of human society. In the foreseeable future, human Social digitalization, networking and intelligent services will be common to us. In such an era of great change brought about by information technology, the direction of information development of archives can neither be avoided nor reversed. The transformation and upgrading in the information age has become the primary problem faced by archives and archivists. The theme of today's conference is "Today and Tomorrow of Archives: Prosperity with the Rapid Development of Archives Diversity". It provides a good platform for us to discuss the work of archives in the era of change. We believe that through this special discussion and exchange, we can achieve the purpose of learning from each other and improving together. According to the theme of this meeting, I will just give a brief introduction of how archives in China have responded to the challenges in the information age in recent years.

1. Challenges and Opportunities in the Age of Change

For a long time, archives of China have been positioned as the base of permanent storage of all kinds of important archives and the center of scientific research and utilization of archives and historical materials. They are regarded as the main body of China's archives undertakings. Through collecting, arranging, protecting and utilizing archives, they play a role in recording the history, inheriting the civilization, serving the society and benefiting the people in the development of economy and society. .

For the past, in the traditional era with paper archives and document archives as the main body, because of the huge volume and difficult preservation of archives, organizations, institutions and individuals generally have the subjective intention to transfer archives to archives. Archives have

formed the exclusive possession of important archives resources for the whole society by receiving archives according to law. The exclusive possession of archives resources and the professionalism of archivists in archival management have established the recognition of the image of archives and the value of archivists to the public in the society. Today, in the digital era with data and information as the main body, because of the change of archives carrier, archives are produced and utilized in more and more diverse ways. Especially in China, which regards informationization as a national development strategy, and enjoys the largest scale of Internet users and second largest information industry in the world, the archives undertakings is facing overwhelming changes brought about by informationization, and the changes are first reflected as the impact on the positioning of archives and the identity of archivists. Specifically, in terms of archives reception and storage, because of the popularization of digital technology, many organizations, institutions and individuals still keep digital copies when handing over paper archives to archives. Archives no longer have exclusive possession over archives. At the same time, facing a large number of electronic archives and electronic data, archives have difficulties to make sure the collection to be integrated and the preservation to be safe and reliable. In the aspect of development and utilization of archives, as more and more archival information has been opened and shared at the time of its emergence, archives that adhere to the traditional way of archival utilization service have gradually declined in the social public service supply system.

While facing the incredible growth rate of electronic archives and data, archives with the the original working mode and archivists with the original professional knowledge structure are hard to cope with this situation. However, these are both challenges and opportunities. The wave of informationization has profoundly changed the function of archives and the professional ecology of archivists. In the face of all these, we need not only the courage to actively seek change, but also the determination to stick to the original career mission.

2. Our Actions in the Age of Change

In such a changing era, in the face of more and more archives resources that exist and circulate in the form of electronic and network, the demand of the public for the utilization of archives is also increasingly showing the trend that the utilization mode more intelligent and the channel for selection more diverse. We believe that archives, regardless of objective requirements or subjective changes, are required to gradually change the traditional carrier archives from "collection, management and utilization" to modern archives information resources management. By actively embracing the changes, we can find the position of archives in the national modernization governance in the information age and find the point that fit with the changing social public needs. To this end, in recent years, the National Archives Administration of China has taken a series of measures.

(1) Encourage archives to continue to strengthen resource construction. We have promulgated a series of administrative laws and regulations on archives filing and collection to provide system guarantee for archives resources construction, which includes not only the *Regulations on the Collection Scope of Archives at All Levels* , but also the *Scope of Filing and the Time Limit for the Storage of Institutions Documents and Archives* as the front end of archives and the *Scope of Filing and the Time Limit for the Storage of Enterprise Documents and Archives*.

By the end of 2018, 650 million volumes (pieces) of archives were collected in China's comprehensive archives at all levels, an increase of 25% over the end of 2014. More importantly, the archival resource structure of the archives is also continuously optimized. On the one hand, the number of special archives related to people's livelihood has increased substantially. The proportion of special archives in many municipal and county archives has reached more than 40% of the total collection, and some have reached 70%, mainly including marriage archives, social security archives, land and woodland certification archives. According to the reality of local economic and social development, some archives have established data centers for special archives, such as the immigration archives data center in Chongqing and the industrial and commercial archives management center in Suzhou. The number of special archives kept by these archives is more than one million volumes (pieces). On the other hand, the number of archives preserved in digital form has increased dramatically.

Through the implementation of the strategy of "digitalization for the stock and electronization for the increment", the digitalization of the First Historical Archives (mainly preserving archives of the Ming and Qing Dynasties) and the Second Historical Archives (mainly preserving archives in the period of the government of the Republic of China) have achieved remarkable results. At present, both archives are actively promoting the digitization of important archives. In addition, the proportion of digitized archives in the total collection of archives at or above the sub-provincial city has been greatly increased.

(2) Promoting the pilot project of single-set management of electronic archives. In recent years, in order to steadily promote the work of archiving, transferring and receiving electronic files we have started with the formulation of relevant standards for electronic archives management. We have successively formulated the *Electronic Metadata Scheme for Documents* (2009), the *Method for Transferring and Receiving Electronic Records* (2012), the *Basic Terms of Electronic Archives Management* (2014), the *Interim Measures for the Archiving Management of Electronic Documents* (2018), *Basic Functions Provisions of Electronic Archives Management Systems* (2018) and other dozens of provisions and technical standards covering the collection and filing of electronic documents and the transfer, reception, storage, preservation and utilization of electronic archives.

In 2012, we also launched a pilot project of electronic archives transfer, reception and long-term preservation system construction in six provinces and municipalities, such as Shanghai, Fujian, Chongqing, Qingdao, Hangzhou and Guangzhou. Through the pilot project, a number of archives have already possessed the ability of receiving electronic archives online. In 2018, we began to carry out the pilot project of single-set system of the filing and management of electronic documents in Shanghai Free Trade Zone. At present, we are gradually promoting the transition of archives management from "double-set" to "single-set" in the whole country in accordance with the principle of "standards formulated first, pilot projects promoted, step by step, risk controlled".

(3) Guiding archives to actively increase access to their collections. Beginning in 2016, we have issued a general plan for safeguarding and increasing access to historical archives. With the support of the central fiscal funds, we have invested nearly 200 million yuan annually to support comprehensive archives at all levels in safeguarding and increasing access to historical archives. In the specific implementation process, we put the access of archives in the first place, especially by recommending topics, guiding comprehensive archives at all levels to further integrate the access of archives resources with the hot issues in reality, so as to make the access of archives closer to government work, people's needs and pulse of the times. Over the past three years, a number of archives utilization achievements have been formed, including a series of compilations of historical archives, research monographs or popular books of historical archives, and a series of special archives exhibitions held at important time nodes, which attract more people to the archives; there were also micro-films made from historical archives, which were well-received after they were broadcast on the mainstream film and television websites. By making great efforts in increasing access to archives, stationary and timeworn archives have become vivid and useful information, and archives have become places to better display the essence of history and culture, as well as local culture. Nowadays, in China, more and more archives have learned to use their collections to integrate all aspects of social resources, break the restrictions of industry and region, and cooperate with all walks of life by means of diversified media carriers, thus broadening the width and scope of archives utilization and meeting the needs of people's spiritual and cultural life. At the same time, it has further enhanced the realistic value of archives work and the social impact of archives work.

(4) The construction of cross-regional archives utilization platform. In recent years, the Chinese government has actively push forward the progress that government services can be accessed via one website, that is to say, people's livelihood things requiring presence in person can be done in one place and without the need for a second trip, thus reducing the cost of work for the masses and enterprises and making people's life better. Thanks to the remarkable improvement of archives structure and the continuous investment in information construction in recent years, archives have become "stars" in this reform. For example, Shanghai's archives at all levels

promote the sharing and construction of people's livelihood archives resources, and continue to make it possible that people's livelihood archives can be handled at any service outlet in the city, and promote the "Internet + people's livelihood archives convenience service". At present, retrieval of livelihood archives in Shanghai can be done on one website. There are 15 kinds of livelihood archives that can be retrieved through the internet, including marriage registration, marriage with a foreigner, veterans, only-child certificates, students' status files, etc. By 2020, the types of archives that can be retrieved will be further expanded to 20 kinds. In addition, if the masses go to the archives window to apply for archival filing, as long as they show their electronic license to the staff through the special mobile phone APP, the staff can go through the filing formalities through online verification, so that they do not need to submit paper materials, so as to achieve the "0 material submission" of using archives. According to statistics, by September this year, archives at all levels in Shanghai had received more than 70,000 inquiries about people's livelihood archives, growing by 31.2% year on year. In April this year, project of accessing people's livelihood archives via one website has been included in the national level Pilot Working Scheme of Government Services Being Accessed Via One Website in the Yangtze River Delta Region, which will be promoted in 26 cities of the region, and gradually realize "local inquiry, cross-archives certification, archives-society linkage, accessed via one website" of people's livelihood archives in the Yangtze River Delta region.

(5) Developing the construction of national model digital archives. In recent years, we have taken the construction of digital archives as an important part of archives information construction. For this reason, we have issued the Guidelines for the Construction of Digital Archives. From the functional requirements of the management system to the development of application systems and the construction of service platforms, from the allocation of hardware and software facilities to the construction of digital archives resources, from the steps of the construction of digital archives to the guarantee of the construction, we have put forward relatively clear ideas and path for reference. In order to promote the construction of digital archives at all levels, we have also launched the certification of "National Model Digital Archives". At present, archives at provincial, municipal and county levels have passed the evaluation certification. By promoting the construction of digital archives, we have also led to the development of electronic archives filing, electronic archives transfer and reception, electronic archives long-term preservation and other work. Nowadays, more and more archives begin to realize the profound changes brought about by informatization in the aspects of circulation mode, archives management means, user experience, archives value realization and file culture dissemination, and rethink the working mode of archives from the perspective of openness, collaboration and sharing. On the basis of this, some archives which are in the forefront of information construction are not only limited to the digitalization of archives and the management of electronic archives, but also try to strengthen the support of information technology and resources at the technical level through the informatization of all

fields, all elements and the whole process of archives work. Data depth management, business-level workflow reengineering, service-level information open and sharing.

3. Our Persistence in the Age of Change

In such a changing era, the ever-changing information technology forces us to catch up with each other, and the huge amount of electronic data produced makes us confused. The sense of crisis that occupation has been replaced and the sense of powerlessness in the face of new things make us anxious. However, the more we live in such an era full of “transformation” and “change”, the more we need the determination to stick to the original career, constantly develop the social functions of archives, and constantly strengthen the professional identity of archivists from the perspective of professionalism. To this end, in recent years, the National Archives Administration of China has made a series of efforts.

(1) Creating motive force for the development of undertakings through reform. Last year, in the process of local institutional reform in China, the archival working system was adjusted accordingly. Originally, the local archives administrative institutions and the local comprehensive archives jointly worked. After the reform, the two branches were separated. The Archives Bureau was specially responsible for the archives administration and the archives were specially responsible for the archives preservation and access. This reform has realized the separation of government affairs, fundamentally straightened out the relationship between the administrative functions of the internal institutions of the archives department and the operation of public services, and created positive conditions for the archives to focus on the main business such as preservation and access. At present, we are taking various measures to further strengthen the basic business construction of archives collection, preservation and access, including resources construction, requiring further enrichment and optimization of archives, especially for digital archives resources, and striving to take cutting-edged strategic control over digital archives. It is required to speed up the informatization process of archives management, innovate the mode of archives informatization management, and realize the modernization of archives management. In the aspect of archives security, it is required to insist on two dimensions of entity security and information security to improve the basic conditions of archives security and enhance the ability of risk management and control of archives security.

(2) Striving hard for the future of archives work. Recently, we have made a clear definition of the current and future social functions of archives, including the functions of patriotic education base, archives security preservation base, archives access service center, disclosed government information access center and electronic archives backup management center. We believe that these five basic social functions are extracted from the nature and function of archives, combined

with the existing working capacity of archives and the current needs of reality, and are a basic requirement for archives in a long period of time. Around the five basic functions, China's archives still have a lot of work to do. In giving full play to the function of patriotic education base, we should make good use of archival resources, attract more people into the archives, and let the audience really gain and be enlightened. In giving full play to the function of archives safety preservation base, the key point is to collect archives on time according to law, to ensure that all kinds of archives should be fully collected, and to do a good job of archives arrangement, description, conservation and other work, to ensure that the archives collected into the holdings are properly and safely preserved. In the aspect of giving full play to the function of archives access service center, the key point is to further improve the service of archives retrieval and access, at the same time, continuously increase the opening of archives, and through the co-construction and sharing of archives resources, make the service of archives access more convenient, fast, with high-quality and efficiency. In the aspect of giving full play to the function of the government information access center, the key point is to implement the "Regulations on Government Information Disclosure" and other legal provisions, and to provide the public with the information that the government institutions have already disclosed. In the aspect of giving full play to the function of electronic archives backup management center, the emphasis is to do a good job in backup of electronic archives and digital achievements of traditional carrier archives, and to provide support and services for inter-archives backup in different places.

The International Council on Archives regards Janus as the patron saint of the profession of archival management, which is to encourage archivists to keep the original archival materials formed in the past and to provide the original archival materials of our times and future for future historical studies. This kind of role orientation, which connects the past and the future, is the basic expectation of the society for our career and the long-term foundation of our career. Thanks to the historical opportunities offered by the development of the information age, compared with the past, archives work has never penetrated into all fields and links of China's economic and social development as deeply as it does today, and has never affected the material and spiritual life of the broad masses of the Chinese people so profoundly as it does today. We believe that in the future, archives will increasingly show their important position and role in China, and archives work will mark a new height on the road to "management according to law, opening up and modernization".