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9th CDNLAO Meeting: China Country Report

Update on the National Library of China

Mr Ren Jiyu, Director

Report given by Zhang Yanbo, Deputy Director

Library Administration

(1) Library Organisational Structure

- Public Libraries - 2767
- Academic Libraries - Over 1400
- Special/Private Libraries - Over 4000

(2) New Libraries that are being built - an increase of 36 public libraries in 1999 as compared with that of 1998.

(3) General Trend of visitorship and membership - issuing 5,960,000 reader's cards for public libraries.

Collection Profile

- Total volume of collection at the national level - 395,000,000 volumes of collections in public libraries including 350,000,000 volumes of books
- Unique Collections/Rare Collections - 2,161,000 volumes of rare collections in public libraries before 1795

Services

- Reference Services (any new initiatives, etc) - answering 1,622,000 reference questions, searching by subject of 42,900 items, editing and compiling secondary and tertiary documents of 66,300 items at the national level in public libraries
- Lending Services - 90,750,000 readers
- Reading promotion - holding all kinds of activities for reading promotion of 30,051 times and with 13,830,000 people attending in total.

Status Report of the National Library of China

Zhang Yanbo
Deputy Director

The year of 2000 sees the achievements and progress of the National Library of China made due to its adhering to reforms in all aspects of its work, all of which has laid a solid foundation for its further development. The achievements made in the past year are below:

1. The Collection and Services

In 2000, due to the Library opening to the public all year round, a total of 3.71 million readers visited the Library. This means that an average of over 10,000 readers visited the Library daily, an increase of 24.4% over 1999. The total number of materials for circulation accounted for 27,737,300 volumes, an increase of 73.8% over 1999. The Library issued 210,000 reader's cards, a 45.3% increase; answered 262,000 reference questions, which increased 7.55 times as against that of 1999. All these achievements mentioned above have resulted in an excellent social effect.

- A total acquisition of 194,000 books, periodicals and other materials (totalling 556,000 volumes) has been added to the collection of the Library. The Library processed and catalogued 212,000 titles (including the arrearage). Now it can say the Library has cleared all arrearage which has existed for many years. In order to maintain the comprehensive collection, actions were taken to claim the publications that should be deposited to the Library by the publishers. With these efforts more than 600 titles of Chinese periodicals have been added to the collection. As of the end of 2000, the total collection of the Library reached 22,500,000 volumes (pieces).
- The Library continues to satisfy the increasing requirements of Government institutions by the input of more funding and human resources. Following the establishment of a joint library by the National Library of China and the Ministry of Personnel on the latter's premises, the Library has jointly, with State Commission of Planning, opened the Macro-Economics Library on the latter's premises with the NLC as a backup. Furthermore, the NLC Branch Library, located close to the Headquarters of the Government, created an Official Publication Reading-Room and Reference Room to directly serve the official institutions.
- The Library extended its services to the public sectors. Individualized services were provided to meet demand of the academics of China

Academy of Sciences and China Academy of Engineering. The Library extended its services to the general readers by opening the Self-Study Room, round the clock book returning, and the loan of audio-video materials. At the same time it expanded the space of some reading-rooms for more open shelves of materials for the readers to freely access. The Library held 6 exhibitions, 24 lectures and 59 seminars to actively function as a cultural and educational institution. In addition to the existing services, the NLC Branch Library opened the Children-Juvenile Reading-Room, a Reading-Room for the Physically Handicapped and an Electronic Reading-Room for the readers to use at downtown of the city.

- The Library gives importance to research and development (R&D). A number of groups were set up to concentrate respectively on the research topics: the strategic development of national libraries, collection development, digitization of the materials from the collection, adoption of standards and rules, automated workflow. We are satisfied that some achievements have been made in this area. Some researches that the Library completed in 2000 are:
 1. National Project 863/300
 2. China Digital Library Application System Running on the High-Speed Chinese Information Demonstrating Network; National Project 863/306
 3. Knowledge Network-Digital Library System Project; the national project: Pilot China Digital Library Project; the key project: Group of Digital Libraries in Zhongguancun Science and Technology Park Area; the implementation of the Standard for the restoration and Quality Control of Ancient Books; Chinese Metadata System; Chinese Library Classification System, etc.

2. Development of the Digital Library and Networkng

The development of the China digital library and networking is the most important task of all for the Library in its future development. The year 2000 sees the continued development in networking and the preparation for the China Digital Library Project:

- Following the establishment of the Intranet (GB Ethernet) comprising of 20 subsystems and 1367 PCs for processing the national publications on one single line, in 2000 the Intranet was reorganized to expand the net nodes from 1673 to 2947.
- The Library stressed the information resources construction and networking service. In the past year, 483,000 bibliographical records were created to take the total number up to 10,780,000 on-line records; 8.6 million pages of full-text pictorial images created, making a total number of 53,000,000 pages on the web for the users to access. 140 million visitors hit the [homepages of the Library](#), an increase of 31.3% as compared with that of 1999; the total information providing volume accounted for 16TB.
- The set-up of the China Digital Library Project Joint Committee and the Advisory Council marks the start of the China Digital Library Project, of which the Secretariat Office is in charge of day-to-day work under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture. In 2000 the Secretariat Office sponsored the establishment of China Digital Library Consortium with 76 libraries and research institutions taking part. Seminars concerning digital library were held; related standards were drafted for adoption; a number of information resource databases were created. [China Digital Library Co. Ltd.](#) was established to cumulate experience of services and seek benefits from the market in order to provide technical and financial support to the future China Digital Library. The planning and design of the extension of the Library building (referred to as Phase II project) in combination with the China Digital Library project has been completed and submitted to the Government for final approval.

3. Deepening the reform in Administration and Management

The implementation of a competitive system in combination with the management and supervisory mechanism has led to the formation of a new working environment. According to the arrangement:

- Anyone who seeks middle managing positions must pass through the procedure of application, competitive speech, open interview, evaluation and then approval by the superior body to be assigned as middle manager. In this way, a group of talented staff members become middle level managers.
- The library introduced the Contract Employment System to raise efficiency and reduce staffing to a reasonable level. Under the system, employment is going in a mutual choice way. Those who have not been chosen by the supervisory side or have not accepted the assignments offered by the supervisory side must leave the positions for those who accept the offering. The total staff was reduced from 1542 in 1995 to 1180 in 2000. The goal for higher efficiency and lower staffing has been finally realized.

4. Staff Training and Development

One of the strategies for the Library is to build and maintain an elite corps of staff to meet the challenges in the future development. Necessary measures are taken to create a good environment for the staff, the young staff in particular, to give a full play in their respective areas.

- A series of training courses at various levels were held for different requirements for the purpose of broadening and updating the professional knowledge of staff members. The courses are related to information technology and networking, which are badly needed in the present and future automation and networking condition. The Library practices the Certificate System - anyone who attends the training courses and has passed the test should remain at his post, or otherwise leave the position. In the year of 2000, a total of 28 training courses were held with 917 staff members participating.
- To broaden the professional knowledge of the managers at different levels, the Library offers them chances to take training courses, encourages them to take degree studies in the home or foreign universities and to visit other major libraries both at home and abroad. The library stresses the position-rotating system for the middle managers to have a chance to head different divisions and departments in order to better fulfil their responsibilities with as much professional knowledge as they have gained, thus finally raising the general Library work to a higher degree.

5. Maintain Good relations and Cooperation with Libraries at Home and Abroad

The Library realizes that an excellent external environment is necessary for the healthy development of the Library. Therefore, the Library stresses the necessity by being deeply involved in and maintaining resource sharing, mutual communication and effective cooperation with other libraries within the country. The Library gives importance to seeking and maintaining good relationships with other libraries of world importance.

- As far as resource sharing is concerned, the Library set up the Resource Sharing Office to push forward this effort. In the geographical area where the Library and a number of research and academic libraries are located, the Library gives importance to existing cooperation with those institutions, such as Peking University, Qinghua University and China Academy of Sciences. The national bibliographical service plays a unique role in the resource sharing. As of the end of 2000, a total of 495 libraries and other institutions from around the country

including Hong Kong and Macao Special Administration Regions are using the bibliographical records for their libraries.

- In response to the national call for supporting the Western Regions of the Country, the Library has signed cooperative agreements with Sichuan and Shanxi Provincial libraries and Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region Library; donated 30,000 volumes of materials and 40 PCs to the libraries and cultural centres of the Region, and furthermore, offered more than 100 city and town libraries the one-year right to freely use the web resources owned by the Library in 2001.
- The Library maintains normal relationships with the national libraries of Russia, Japan, Korea, and the DPRK. It should be mentioned that we have kept good relations and friendly cooperation with Singapore Library Board for many years. A joint cooperative project entitled Information Resource Construction and Sharing for Chinese Documents is held with 42 Chinese libraries from 7 countries and regions participating in, which have laid a concrete foundation for the development of Chinese resource sharing globally.

The period of 2001-2005 is very important to China as the 10th Five Year Plan for National Economic Development will be implemented. During this period China will continue to reform its infrastructure for further development. Speeding up information dissemination is one of the goals to be achieved. The National Library of China, functioning as the largest national information centre, must spare no time to take the opportunity for its development. The tasks which the Library should fulfil are highlighted below:

- *Strengthen Administration and Management, and Increase Access to Reader's Services.* The Library will effectively guide and coordinate research and implementation of the collection development, computer and networking construction, digital resource construction. An integrated library system for processing publications in foreign languages will be installed. The present Collection Development Policy of the Library will be amended to include electronic and web publications in addition to the printed materials for the users. We will evaluate the collection structure to identify its strength and weakness, then to take measures to rationalize the collection to better serve the users. The research and implementation of various standards, rules and formats, the feasibility study of the library performance evaluation is now in progress for possible use in the Library. The Library is determined to raise its reader's services to a higher level. We will continue to make all our efforts meet the requirements of the legislature, Government institutions, key national construction projects, important research programs with different kinds of services, while offering good services to the general users. To provide services for the national and international users through Internet is regarded as a new area to which the Library will attach great importance.
- *The building of the digital library* is of great significance to the national economic development and towards the realization of information society. The Library will make every effort to have the Phase II project including digital library project approved by the Government, to start the feasibility studies.
- *Expansion of information resource development for the formation of the cultural information industry.* The Library will make full use of its information resources and human resource, as well as an excellent working mechanism to contribute to the deepening exploration of information and documentation, thus to make the Library the largest and final resort for information and document supply in the country. We will reach this goal by all-dimensioned planning and designing in collection, processing, promotion, market expansion, finally to contribute to the formation of an integrated cultural industry.

In the information age, the friendly network interface and rapidly increasing demands of society has created good changes to libraries. The National Library of China is willing to strengthen cooperation in development of the digital library with the national libraries of Asian and Pacific Regions. Let us work together to make joint contribution to the prosperity of this area.

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