

OPENING OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CHINA'S NEW PREMISES - ANU
LIBRARY DELEGATION

After several years of planning and construction, the new building of the National Library of China (NLC) was officially opened on 6 October, 1987.

Over 30 foreign guests (excluding visitors and Hong Kong librarians financed from other sources) were invited to participate in the opening ceremony; these included national librarians from UK, USA, Canada, Japan, USSR, Thailand, New Zealand and Australia. The Australian National University (ANU) delegation, which consisted of Colin Steele, the University Librarian, Y.S. Chan, Head of the Asian Studies Division, and Susan Prentice, East Asian Studies Librarian, was the biggest on the guest list. It illustrates the fact that NLC and ANU Library have a long-established good relationship which is still growing in many aspects.

During their stay in Beijing, the three-member delegation was heavily engaged in other professional activities which included participation in a seminar on Chinese computing organised by NLC, discussions on Chinese book supply with major Chinese publications distributors, and a meeting with the Senior Adviser (formerly Chief) of the Publications Commission.

In addition, the delegation accepted an invitation from the Library Science Department of Peking University to give a one-day seminar to teachers and graduate students of the Department. The talks covered various aspects of librarianship and new library technology and were well received.

After one week's stay in Beijing, Susan Prentice and Y.S. Chan went to Sichuan at the invitation of the Library Association of Sichuan and the Sichuan Provincial Library. Apart from discussions on future co-operation, Y.S. Chan gave a talk on "The present and the future of librarianship".

The new NLC building is very impressive. It was agreed by all participants that it is the biggest single library building in the world. In addition to its grandiose looks, the library has installed all sorts of modern, advanced equipment in the way of audio-visual aids, optical discs and an automated circulation system, as well as a sophisticated Chinese computing system which, it is envisaged, will link up with other major libraries in China and network with international systems.

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