CHINA: A LATE STARTER IN MODERN INFORMATION SCIENCE

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A recent first-hand account of China's major institutions in science and technology, information centres, and libraries is presented. The progress of these institutions after liberation and the programmes before them are highlighted. With the present rate of progress, China is likely to face an information explosion within a decade.

1. INTRODUCTION

Development of science and technology, social sciences, arts and culture, for that matter, any subject of learning, in a country depends on the availability of information and its proper utilization. China is no exception to this rule.

Being one of the oldest civilizations on earth, China rightly boasts of its heritage in the field of learning. The centuries old manuscripts and other literary wealth preserved in the nation's archives show the extent and vastness of scholarship the country had produced in its past. But during the last several decades, achievements in this field are not very impressive by standards set by Western countries. One may attribute historical and political reasons to this lacklustre performance.

Decades of civil war and years of world war in the first half of this century posed enormous hurdles for the development of learning and scholarship. During the past 33 years of Communist administration, intellectual activities and independent thinking — two factors vital for the growth of learning and scholarship — had fallen victims to the whims of the policy makers more than once.

In the mid-fifties, it was the demise of the much-heralded “Let hundred flowers blossom”; mid-sixties witnessed the decade-long monstrosities of the Cultural Revolution. These tragic periods saw the decline and disappearance of intellectuals and scholars. However, today, a new awareness of the importance of learning and scholarship has returned with the imprisonment of the champions and promoters of the Cultural Revolution. It has been realised that the present leadership's determination to modernise the country and its economy, would not succeed without the help and cooperation of intellectuals and scholars.

A relatively free atmosphere for them to read and write, and massive facilities for information dissemination among the new generation are pre-conditions. The government seems to be aware of the importance of this aspect of the development of information science without which the call for modernisation would remain a mere slogan.

Today, China is a member of most of the international organisations. It is eager to absorb what is good for its over-all development from other countries while it keeps emphasising the importance of self-reliance. Thousands of students are sent abroad to study science, technology and social sciences.

China is also a member of the Federation of International Documentation Congress which held its 41st annual conference in Hong Kong during September 6-12, 1982. Of the 250 delegates from 55 countries who took part at the conference, eight were from China. Soon after the conference, the Hong Kong Polytechnic, where the conference was held, organised a
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two-week tour of China's major universities and documentation centres for the delegates.

As a member of the group which visited Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai and Hangzhou, I was able to gather some first-hand data on the developments of China's information processing and dissemination.

China has made an impressive start in organizing its information activities. If the present pace is continued, by the turn of the century, Chinese institutions will be able to match those of relatively advanced countries. But the task before China is tremendous, for it faces innumerable hurdles. Funding seems to be the most serious among them. Acute shortage of trained staff is next. Computerisation and automation are difficult, as standardization of classification system and cataloguing poses several problems.

Library education is inadequate; the libraries are manned by high-school graduates with hardly any specialist education in library science. Even the best of libraries, not to mention those in small towns and small universities, do not have adequate amenities -- such as fans, heating, clean toilets, good lighting. Some libraries are not on ground floor, and lifts are not provided either.

In most cases, students/readers have no access to books except through the staff. Unfortunately, the staff, being inadequately trained, can't guide much the readers. Since the books are in closed areas, readers can't look for themselves. Though the libraries are huge, paperbacks form a major proportion of the collections.

The enthusiasm of young people to read and gain knowledge is evident by the large number of readers one witnesses in libraries. If adequate facilities are provided, with increasing collection of reading material, China will see an information explosion in a decade's time, and a generation of scholars and intellectuals, the nation's most valuable asset, if it is put to use intelligently.

1. SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT IN PRC

After the founding of the People's Republic of China the State allotted massive grants to develop science and technology. Long-term development plans were made and many scientific research institutes established, including the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Chinese Academy of Medical Science, the Chinese Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences, and other natural and social science research institutes. Research institutes are run by provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities.

In 1955, the Government decided to embark on atomic energy research and the following year a 12 year-plan for scientific development was initiated. The main goals were realized five years ahead of schedule, with many major successes. China exploded its first atom bomb on October 16, 1964 and launched its first satellite in 1970. The National Science Conference was convened in 1978 to accelerate the development of science and technology in China. The eight year-plan (1978-85) drawn up at the conference gives prominence to agriculture, energy resources, computer technology, laser technology, aerospace, high-energy physics and genetic engineering. The scientists and technologists are working hard to fulfill this plan as its realization will speed up the country's modernization.

The research activities are taken care of by the following five categories of agencies:

1. The Chinese Academy of Sciences.
2. Research departments of universities and other institutes of higher learning.
3. Research bodies of various industrial departments.
4. Local institutes of scientific research & mass scientific experimental organizations.
5. The National defence research departments.

The State Scientific and Technological Commission was founded in 1955 to plan, organize and co-ordinate all research efforts. Under it the Chinese Scientific and Technical Information Institute was set up.

The Chinese Academy of Sciences, founded in 1949, reorganized research institutes and
set up new institutes to do research on nuclear science, experimental biology, geology, geophysics, etc. About 36,000 scientists and technologists are working in 100 institutes, engaged in research activities for China's current modernization plan. The late Mr. Guo Moruo, an outstanding figure in science and technology, was President of the Academy for more than two decades until his death in 1978. This post is held today by the noted chemist Mr Lu Jiaxi. The Academy publishes more than 77 academic journals on natural sciences.

More than 8,000 research bodies with over 300,000 staff are affiliated to various industrial departments like agriculture, iron & steel industry, railway engineering, post and telecommunications & textile industry etc.

3. ACADEMIC SOCIETIES

Apart from the scientific research agencies there are some 90 societies and associations for specific branches of science and technology. Together they have more than 1,300 branches in the large and medium-sized cities. They form a mammoth network for academic exchange. The China Science and Technology Association, founded in 1958, is a blanket organization of the various specialized scientific and technological societies and associations.

The Association has the following main functions: to sponsor and organize scientific and technological exchange, convene forums, publish academic journals and papers, and summarize and exchange results and experiences; to disseminate scientific and technological knowledge, sponsor and organize scientific experiments among the people in general; to encourage scientists and technologists to make proposals on the country's scientific and technological work; to forge friendly links with scientific and technological bodies and individual scientists and technologists abroad, and promote international exchanges in science and technology.

4. DISSEMINATION

In addition to training scientists and technologists in regular institutes, much attention is paid to the dissemination of scientific and technological knowledge among the public and promotion of popular scientific-technological activities. The subject matter ranges from such basics as mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and geography to astronomy, meteorology, geology, medicine and health, and environmental protection. The public are also being acquainted with advanced technologies such as electronic computers, principles and applications of lasers, comprehensive utilization of natural resources and energy resources.

Popularization of science and technology in China takes many forms, but essentially it is carried out in the following ways:

1. Forums: The China Science and Technology Association and its affiliated societies and planetariums, museums of natural sciences and other such bodies frequently arrange lectures and exhibitions on various fields of science and technology. Radio and TV stations broadcast science and technological programmes.

2. Films: Production and showing of scientific and educational films. China has two special studios, one in Beijing and the other in Shanghai, producing such films. Some provinces, municipalities, autonomous regions and central industrial departments also produce scientific and educational films. The Ministry of Agriculture has its own studio producing films on agricultural topics. Every year, these units produce about 400 scientific and educational films for countrywide distribution.

3. Science and technological publications: Many government departments and popular organizations, such as the Popular Science Publishing House under the China Science and Technology Association and national and local publishers, bring out books and journals for the public on science and technological subjects. Large-circulation science journals are Science Pictorial, Scientific Experiment and Knowledge is Strength.
4. Activities for youth: Scientific and technological activities for young people are varied and take many forms, such as, radio, aeroplane modelling, meteorology, biology and astronomy groups. There are extra-curricular science and technology classes centred on the basic sciences, applied sciences and new technologies. Also held are meetings between scientists and young people, lectures and competitions in mathematics, physics and chemistry. In 1978, the China Science and Technology Association, together with the Ministry of Education, organized a mathematics contest for young people in eight provinces and municipalities. It resulted in the selection of 57 secondary school students who were admitted to key universities without further examinations. In 1979 a national exhibition of scientific and technological works by young people was held in Beijing, which attracted enormous interest.

5. THE INSTITUTE OF SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL INFORMATION, BEIJING

The ISTIC was set up in Beijing in 1956. That laid the foundation for organizing information resources and activities in Science and Technology in China. Initially, started with a meagre staff of 200, it has now more than 1,000 people working full-time, among them 300 are professionally qualified. It has its own printing press, and photocopying facilities.

The ISTIC has the following three major functions:
A. Keeping pace with new developments and updating.
1. Research on Information Science and Technology.
2. Publication of research papers.
4. Using audio-visual material.
5. Updating of subject indexes.
6. Acquisition of increasing number of secondary periodicals.

B. Dissemination of Information
1. Publication of technical journals especially on information technology.
2. Technical processing of documents (according to Chinese system) and translation of overseas journals and research papers.
3. Providing information to technicians in various industrial departments.

C. Documentation
1. Getting ready for open access system to the stock.
2. Reprinting of documents.
3. Getting feedback from readers.
4. Organizing Reference Department.
5. Organizing debates and seminars.
6. Organizing exhibitions and forums etc.
7. In order to satisfy the demands of 'Modernization Program', the Institute will soon do research on mechanized indexing and translation.

Future Plans
1. Automation in indexing.
2. Affiliation and cooperation with international organizations to keep pace with the latest developments and to implement their present projects.

6. THE INSTITUTE OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION, SHANGHAI

The Institute of Scientific and Technical Information of Shanghai was founded in 1958 as a regional documentation centre under the supervision of the Scientific and Technological Commission of Shanghai.

The principal task of the Institute is to meet the needs for the development of science and technology. It is engaged in collecting, acquiring, classifying, reporting and providing Chinese and foreign documents, carrying out information analyses and organizing exchanges of information, accepting requests for SDI...
searches—all in the service of universities, research, factories, etc.

At present, the Institute has a staff of over 540. A director and deputy directors direct the operation of the Institute through an administration office and a co-ordination office. The Institute is divided into seven departments, namely:

1. Documentation Department;
2. Shanghai Scientific and Technological Literature Publishing House;
3. Shanghai "Scientific and Technical Information Consultancy Service Centre;
4. Scientific and Technical Information Analysis Department;
5. Information Automation Research Department;
6. Documentary Film Department;
7. Printing Shop.

Documentation Department holds about 4,000 titles of periodicals from more than 30 countries and regions of the world and patent specifications from the United States of America, Japan, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom, France, the Soviet Union, Canada, Switzerland and other countries, totalling more than 11,000,000 copies. Besides some 650,000 technical reports (such as AD reports, PB reports, DOE reports and NASA reports), the Department also has in collection proceedings of international conferences, standards of various countries, specifications and catalogues of foreign products and scientific and technical periodicals published in China. In addition, the Department also collects more than 300 titles of secondary periodicals, among which "Chemical Abstracts", "Engineering Index", "Government Reports Announcements & Index" and "Current Bibliography on Science and Technology" are complete from their very first issue onward.

Documentation Department bears the responsibility to acquire, catalogue, classify and maintain documents, to provide them to readers, to familiarize readers to the collection and various search methods; to recommend secondary sources; to answer questions raised by users in their searches; and to study the essence, characteristics and search methods of different kinds of documents.

The collection of Chinese documents are classified according to "Chinese National Classification for Books and Other Materials". For all foreign materials, their original classification numbers are generally kept.

Service hours for eight reading rooms are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM from Monday to Saturday. In 1981, the Department received over 230,000 readers, handled 2,100 enquires for documents; and utilized the services of a number of retired scientists, technicians etc. who have a good mastery of foreign languages to translate scientific and technical materials for research centres and factories. They have now accumulated more than 10,000 translations from English, Japanese, German, French, Russian, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, Czech, Polish and Danish, and all are available to readers.

The reporting of collected documents is mainly done by Shanghai Scientific and Technological Literature Publishing House. It publishes periodicals like "Scientific and Technical News Abroad", cover-to-cover translation of the American publication "Science News", abstracts, indexes and translations of studies done on subjects belonging to various disciplines. In 1981, it published 190 kinds of information materials, totalling 30,000,000 words.

The newly established Shanghai Scientific and Technical Information Consultancy Service Centre renders scientific and technical information consultancy service; fosters technical information exchanges and hastens the flow of information from research units to production units; handles written or verbal enquires, bring different units together to engage in technical cooperation; and offer SDI service upon request.

Photocopying service is provided by Printing Shop. It made over 1,200,000 pages of photocopies in 1981.

In cooperation with outside research workers, Scientific and Technical Information Ana-
lysis Department investigates and studies the state-of-the-art and trends of scientific and technological developments at home and abroad.

In the modernization of information process, staff members of Automation Research Department and scientists from other organizations have been concentrating on the development and application of computerized typesetting of Chinese characters and computerized retrieval of information for the last few years and have achieved some progress. In the meantime, they have made preparations to share in the studying of computerized translation of documents.

The task of Documentary Film Department is to make films and videotapes of scientific and technical subjects and project the resulting films and tapes to the public.

**Main features of ISTIC at Shanghai**

1. The headquarters of ISTIC is at Beijing; the only branch is in Shanghai; regional documentation centres are in various provinces.

2. Though Shanghai ISTIC is the branch, it works independently and follows post coordination policy. Every effort is made to be self-reliant though occasional exchange and coordination programmes are organized.

3. Computerized Retrieval System and Computerized Typing System are at present under experiment.

4. After 1978, a large number of documents were received from FID.

5. ISTIC has a huge storage room for microfiche and a separate room for microprint reader.

6. 40 fen (Chinese cents) are charged for title search, and 50 fen for Abstracts Search.

7. The annual budget is:
   - 2.49 million yuan in 1981
   - 2.54 million yuan in 1982
   - over 1.4 million is spent for purchasing of reading material out of which over 90% is spent for foreign publications.

7. **BEIJING UNIVERSITY**

The Beijing University campus occupies about 145 hectares of land on the northwest outskirts of Beijing in a beautiful park-like area which dates back to the Qing Dynasty. Originally, the campus was founded to house the famous American Methodist Yanjing University. In the later part of the 19th century, many schools were set up for western learning among which the Capital College (Jingshi Daxuetang) was the only institution that survived the 1911 Revolution. The College was renamed as Beijing University.

Though in earlier days academic freedom was not encouraged, after the appointment of the well-known educationist Cai Yuanpei as the chancellor in 1917, many reforms were introduced. People of different schools of thoughts expressed their views openly and held debates in a free atmosphere and the university grew very soon into an ideological and cultural centre of China.

In 1918, Mr Li Dazhao, who organized the first Marxist Study Group in China and later became the founder of the Chinese Communist Party, was appointed as the Chief Librarian and the Professor of Economics. Chairman Mao Zedong worked in the library during 1918-1919. He devoted himself to the study of Marxism. The rooms where Mao Zedong and Li Dazhao worked are still kept intact in the Red Building.

In 1952, Beijing University was amalgamated with Yanjing University and the Yanjing campus became part of the capital institution. A modified Chinese style of architecture was adopted for its main buildings. Winding paths and stream still flowing past the older buildings with their huabiao (stone animals) standing in front are the reminders of historical change and progress. It has beautiful surroundings. In the northwest side of the campus is Weiminghu Lake, reflecting the pavillions and the pagoda-style water tower along its shore.

The University has 22 departments teaching 66 subjects and has 14 research institutes, with 8,000 students. The admission is highly competitive and only the most outstanding students are
selected. According to recent statistics, only top five students were admitted for studying Mathematics, and only two top students for Arts & Sciences among 4.6 million students who took the National Entrance Examinations in 1979. Student’s tuition is paid by the Government as at other institutions of higher education in China. The well-equipped University hospital provides free medical care, and government grants are available to students from poorer families.

The faculty of the Beijing University is considered among the best in the country, and many of its 380 professors are well-known scholars. The famous demographer, Ma Yinchu, who advocated planned population growth in 1957, was President of the university in the 1950s. On the south side of the campus behind a bamboo grove is the residence of the famous linguist, Professor Wang Li. Wang Li has spent more than 50 years studying the Chinese language and has written many books and papers on Chinese phonetics, grammar, linguistic history and prosody.

The University provides a favourable environment for scientific research. University researchers have developed the principal part for a system of laser editing and typesetting of Chinese characters, which has modernized China’s printing and photo-composition.

Graduates from the University and the former Yanjing University are now scattered throughout China and the world. Many of them have become outstanding scholars and statesmen. Noted geologist Li Siguang was appointed head of the geological department in 1929. It was he who first pointed out that the continental deposit was oil bearing, repudiating the theory that China was an oil-poor country. His student, Pei Wenzhong, was a member of the team which discovered the 500,000-year-old skull of Peking Man.

Many foreigners have taught, studied or worked at the university, and some have become close friends of the Chinese people. The most famous among them was American journalist Edgar Snow, author of Red Star over China, a book that caused a stir throughout the world. In 1934, Snow, then a correspondent for Asia for the Saturday Evening Post, was also a part-time lecturer in the department of journalism of Yanjing University. While studying Chinese and writing his dispatches, he was close to students with progressive ideas.

China’s present Foreign Minister Husang Hua was then a leader of the Yanjing Students Union, and later went to Yenan with Snow’s help. When the War of Resistance against Japan broke out in 1937, Deng Yingchao, wife of the later Premier Zhou Enlai, was recuperating from an illness in the Western Hills. Snow disguised her as his nurse to help her leave Beijing safely and avoid arrest by the enemy. Before his death, Snow asked that a part of his ashes be buried in China. A site on the banks of the Weiminghu was chosen, and a white tombstone now marks the spot where the ashes were buried. Zhou Enlai and Deng Yingchao were present at the internment in 1973. With deep feeling, the Premier said, “He will remain here. The Chinese people will never forget him.”

In the thirty years since Liberation, more than 2,500 foreign students from over 50 countries have studied at the University. The present enrolment of foreign students is around 130. Most of them spend at least one year studying Chinese at the Beijing Languages Institute before proceeding to university classes in Chinese literature, history, philosophy, economics, chemistry and biology.

71 Beijing University Library

The Beijing University Library was established in 1898. It is considered as the largest University Library in China. It has 23 departments, 12 for natural sciences such as Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics etc and 11 for liberal arts like History, Philosophy, Law, Library Science, Western and Eastern languages etc.

Among 9,000 students in the University, 800 are postgraduates and 200 students are enrolled on Exchange Programme from 20 countries. The University’s teaching staff number 2,000. There are a number of research institutes attached to the University e.g. Institute of Asian and African Studies, Institute of Natural Sciences. It has its own Publishing
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House producing two journals one on natural sciences and the other on social sciences.

There are 31 reading rooms in the library which have seating accommodation for 2,000 readers. It has a total of 3,500,000 volumes of monographs of which 900,000 are non-Chinese. Among 20,000 periodical titles in the library 9,000 are non-Chinese. Audio tapes are used to provide instructions on how to use the library, and special seminars are held on how to use reference books like dictionaries, encyclopaedias etc.

The catalogues are divided into.

1. Chinese language (only two entries, Main and Classified)
2. Non-Chinese language (Main and added entries).

The collection is kept in closed area; access is possible only through library staff; part of the old collection was classified by a Chinese adoption of Dewey Decimal Classification while the rest by a Chinese Classification Scheme. Ten floors are occupied by the library; annual increase of stock is approximately 100,000 volumes. There is a large number of old manuscripts from 6th to 7th centuries, also from the Ching and Ming Dynasties.

8 NANJING UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

It ranks second after Beijing Library, because of its long history. It has a total area of 17,000 sq. meters. Collection totals 2.7 million volumes of which 1.3 million is in Chinese and 55,000 in foreign languages. It has a total of 8,500 periodicals. At the entrance, a huge Display Guide Map of different departments, the sections catches the attention of visitors. Except for the faculty staff and research students, the entire collection is in closed access. They organize orientation programs for the effective use of the library. They have training facilities for professional staff of the library. The capacity of the reading rooms is for 10,000 students. They have a special audio-visual room. 600 periodicals are displayed; after the display, they are circulated to different departments. In due course, they are bound and stored in the Main Library. Though the library has exchange facilities, it prefers to purchase original copy of documents in line with the self-reliance policy.

91 Beijing Library

Beijing Library, China's national library for more than 70 years, is the country's largest, both in size and in number of books. It now contains more than 9.8 million volumes, documents and manuscripts, seven times as many as in 1949, and 100 times as many as it had at its founding. The main library building, a palace-style structure with green glazed-tile roof, stands inside a red-walled compound to the west of Beihai Park in the centre of Beijing. Its predecessor was the Qing Imperial Library, founded in 1910 and opened to the public in 1912 after the Republican Revolution. Although, as a national library, it is comparatively young, much of its collection can be traced back to earlier times. For instance, it has inherited the collections of the Jixidian, the Imperial Library of the Southern Song dynasty, and of the Wenwuang, and the Imperial Library of the Ming dynasty.

On its founding in 1910, it incorporated the Cabinet Library, the Imperial Academy Library and the Imperial College Library from the Qing court, plus some private libraries; it subsequently acquired the Siku Quanshu, formerly held at the Wenjing in Chengde, manuscripts from the Dunhuang Grottoes and the library of the Yang family from Liaocheng, Shandong. Since 1949, the library of the Yang family from Liaocheng, Shandong. Since 1949, the library has been further enriched through purchases,exchanges and gifts. The Siku Quanshu (Complete Library of the Four Treasures of Knowledge), an encyclopedic collection of pre-modern books compiled 200 years ago, is stored in the rare-book room. Its 3,503 titles in 36,304 volumes are divided into four categories: classics, history, philosophy and belles lettres. It is one of the seven original manuscript copies and is bound in traditional Chinese thread-bound style with covers of green, red, blue and grey silk.

The rare-book room also houses the famous Yongle Dadian (Yongle Encyclopedia), com-
COMPLETED 570 YEARS AGO UNDER THE YONGLE EMPEROR OF THE MING DYNASTY. IT ORIGINALLY CONSISTED OF 11,095 VOLUMES IN 22,937 FASCICULES, BUT MOST OF THEM WERE LOST IN THE PLUNDER AND DESTRUCTION BY THE WESTERN POWERS IN 1900; ONLY SOME VOLUMES ARE LEFT IN THE BEIJING LIBRARY.

THERE ARE ALSO QUITE A NUMBER OF BOOKS PRINTED FROM WOOD BLOCKS DATING FROM THE SONG, JIN AND YUAN DYNASTIES (10TH TO 14TH CENTURIES). AMONG THEM IS WHAT MAY BE THE WORLD'S Earliest bound book, WenYuan Yinghua (Flowers from the Literary Garden), from the Jixidian Collection in the Southern Song Imperial Library. The book was designed and bound by a Chinese worker named Wan Run in 1260. Others include incomplete Song dynasty edition of Kaibao Zang made from a block cut in 971; ZhaoCheng Zang, printed from stone blocks in 1148 under the Jin dynasty; Mengxi Bitan (Notes from the Dream Brook) printed in 1305. Shizhuzhai Jianpu (Designs for Letter Paper from the Studio of Ten Bamboos), printed from blocks engraved around 1644, features colour illustrations and is considered a masterpiece of Ming dynasty colour printing.

The library has a great number of other thread-bound books on many subjects including philosophy, economics, politics, military affairs, literature, art, history, geography, astronomy, mathematics, chemistry, medicine, architecture and hydraulics. It also has books in the languages of more than twenty minor languages of China, including Mongolian, Manchu, Uyghur and Korean.

The periodical collection has complete sets of Chinese and foreign publications, including the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (1788), Nature (1869) and the U S Chemical Abstracts (1907). There are also fairly complete sets of some early Chinese newspapers and magazines including Dongfang Zazhi (Eastern Miscellany) from 1904, Minbao (People's Herald), Shizu (Current Affairs) and Shenbao (Shanghai Daily).

Since 1949, the library has acquired many volumes of Marxist classics and documents of revolutionary significance. They include original letters between Marx and Engels; a copy of the first German edition of Das Kapital published in 1867; one of the first Russian editions of Lenin's What is to be Done?; an early edition of the late Chairman Mao Zedong's On New Democracy printed from wood blocks; Shao Nian (South), a magazine edited by the late Premier Zhou Enlai while a member of a Chinese communist student group in Paris, and many publications from China's revolutionary base areas during the war years. Along with these in the rare-book room are original manuscripts by famous modern scholars and writers, including Lu Xun, Gua Moruo, Mao Dun and Ba Jin.

Today, Beijing Library has taken on a new look. The fifteen reading rooms with 2,000 seats are full everyday with readers ranging from professors and specialists to young technicians, workers and students. In 1978, 590,000 readers were admitted. Though its floor space has increased from the pre-Liberation 8,000 square metres to 50,000, it still cannot accommodate all those who wish to use it. A new library building is under construction, and new reading rooms are being set up.

Beijing Library has done much to promote cultural exchanges with other countries. It has exchange relations with 2,000 libraries in 120 countries and Hong Kong and Macao; librarians from Beijing Library have been on delegations visiting libraries in the United States, Japan, Australia and Britain.

92 Zhejiang University Library, Hangzhou

Zhejiang University is known as the Chinese MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). Very recently it celebrated its 85th anniversary. It is the second largest, after the Beijing University.

The new library building was completed in 1982. The entire collection is of science and technology. It has 2 million books in stock and 13,000 periodicals of which 5,100 are subscribed from foreign countries. In foreign languages collection, English, Japanese, Russian, German and French are the main languages. The library has 93 professional staff. They purchase over 80,000 books yearly. The chief Librarian is Mr Yan Wenxing, who is also Professor of Chemistry, Director of Library of
Zhejiang University, Hangzhou and member of Council and China Society of Library Science.

Four thousand secondary periodicals are in the stock. Half a million yuan is the annual budget which does not include staff salary.

There is a shortage of qualified professional staff in the library. Mostly high school graduates work in the library. It doesn't have its own training facilities to train them. Five storeys have been occupied by the stock. Enough room is kept for future expansion. The present library has moved from place to place many times. That's why the staff spend a lot of time in planning and organizing the whole set up. Some years ago the books on Medicine and Agriculture were moved to their respective universities, as they were separated from the present Institute.

The library operation as well as technical processing of reading material are not computerized as they have ahead a great task of standardizing classification and cataloguing practices according to the Chinese system. At present, they adopt a modified Dewey Decimal scheme and, sometimes, a scheme somewhat similar to the Library of Congress Classification Scheme but with single alphabet. The whole collection is in closed access except for the teaching staff and the research students. The Chinese Guang Hua Publicity Agency (Beijing) reprints expensive reference books published in foreign countries. Though they are aware of the Copyright Convention, they cannot afford to buy many copies of foreign reference books as well as primary and secondary periodicals.

93 General Observations

1. The people are very eager and enthusiastic to modernize their country.

2. Every effort is made to speed up the plans and programs.

3. During the period of the Cultural Revolution, the intellectual community suffered severely; now there is a widespread realisation that China is lagging behind the Western countries in many spheres.

4. Though Chairman Mao worked as the Librarian at the Beijing University Library, his name was not uttered. Generally people try to avoid speaking about him, giving the impression they are trying to de-emphasise his image and work.

5. Self-reliance is the main consideration at every policy decision, though the leadership is keen to achieve progress quickly.

6. The stock of the Russian books is very outdated. After 1960, no new titles of the Russian reading material were added.

7. China has close cooperation with Japan and U.S.A. as far as its computer technology is concerned.

8. With the present speed, China will certainly achieve its objective of modernising the country by the end of this century.

9. People are very polite, kind, cooperative and cardial nature. National interest and pride seem the decisive factor in people's speech and action.