

CHINA

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CHINA

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As of the end of 2003, the collection at the National Library of China has reached 24.11 million items. There are 1,337 staff members currently, among which those with undergraduate qualification and above account for eighty percent.

There are about 3,000 network nodes inside the National Library of China and the Library has gradually implemented the uniform management of mass network data storage, data backup and data security. At present, the total amount of digital resources at the National Library of China has already reached 10TB, and accommodates more than 190 million visits every year. After a one-year trial, the ALEPH500 integrated library management system purchased from overseas was officially implemented in 2003. This new system incorporates over ninety percent of the whole library's basic operations and services for regular readers, including the automated management and control of the acquisitions, cataloguing, processing, circulation and serial control as well as multi-lingual searching and online requesting of library materials etc.

In 2003, the number of onsite readers reached 4.48 million, and the number of items circulated was 24.78 million. The amount of information requests was 260,000 and 150,000 reader cards were issued.

The National Library of China has also given full play to its functions like public education and cultural dissemination, fulfilling its cultural role by means of exhibitions, lectures and training. In 2003, 201 various lectures were held attracting 60,000 readers. Such treasure exhibitions as the Yongle Canon restoration exhibition, the exhibition on the restoration of ancient books at the National Library, the exhibition on the achievements in collating and rearranging of ancient books at the National Library, the exhibition on precious calligraphy from the collection of the National Library and the exhibition on the restoration of Xixia literature were extremely popular among readers. The National Library co-organised the exhibition on the history of ancient Chinese books with Singapore and the exhibition on Ancient Chinese Rare Books with Block Printing and other Treasures from the Collection of the National Library of China with Hungary, further enhancing the cultural exchange and cooperation between the National Library of China and other countries.

At the end of 2003, the National Library of China Phase II and National Digital Library project was officially launched. The total construction area of the Phase II building is 77,687 square meters with a total investment of 1,235 million Yuan from the state. Due to complete in 2007, the new building will accommodate compactus shelving for 12 million items, reading rooms with a total of 2,900 seats, and access to the National Digital Library and associated facilities. By that time, the premises of the National Library of China will cover an area of 250,000 square meters.

In line with the principles of alliance, openness and sharing, the National Library has enhanced international exchange and cooperation and joined forces with other libraries in the research and establishment of key technologies and technical standards to use in setting up its own digital library. In using an open technological framework to build the National Digital Library, the National Library aims to create the largest Chinese digital resource in the world and becomes the most advanced network service center in China.

The “Chinese rare books re-creation project” which aims at carrying forward the fine traditional Chinese culture and boosting academic research in this area has yielded initial fruits. About 180 titles of re-created rare books have been published and the Library’s effort has been applauded at home and abroad. This project helps not only to preserve, regenerate and make good use of rare and ancient books but also make copies accessible to academic researchers as well as members of the general public.

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