

# New Library Buildings of the World

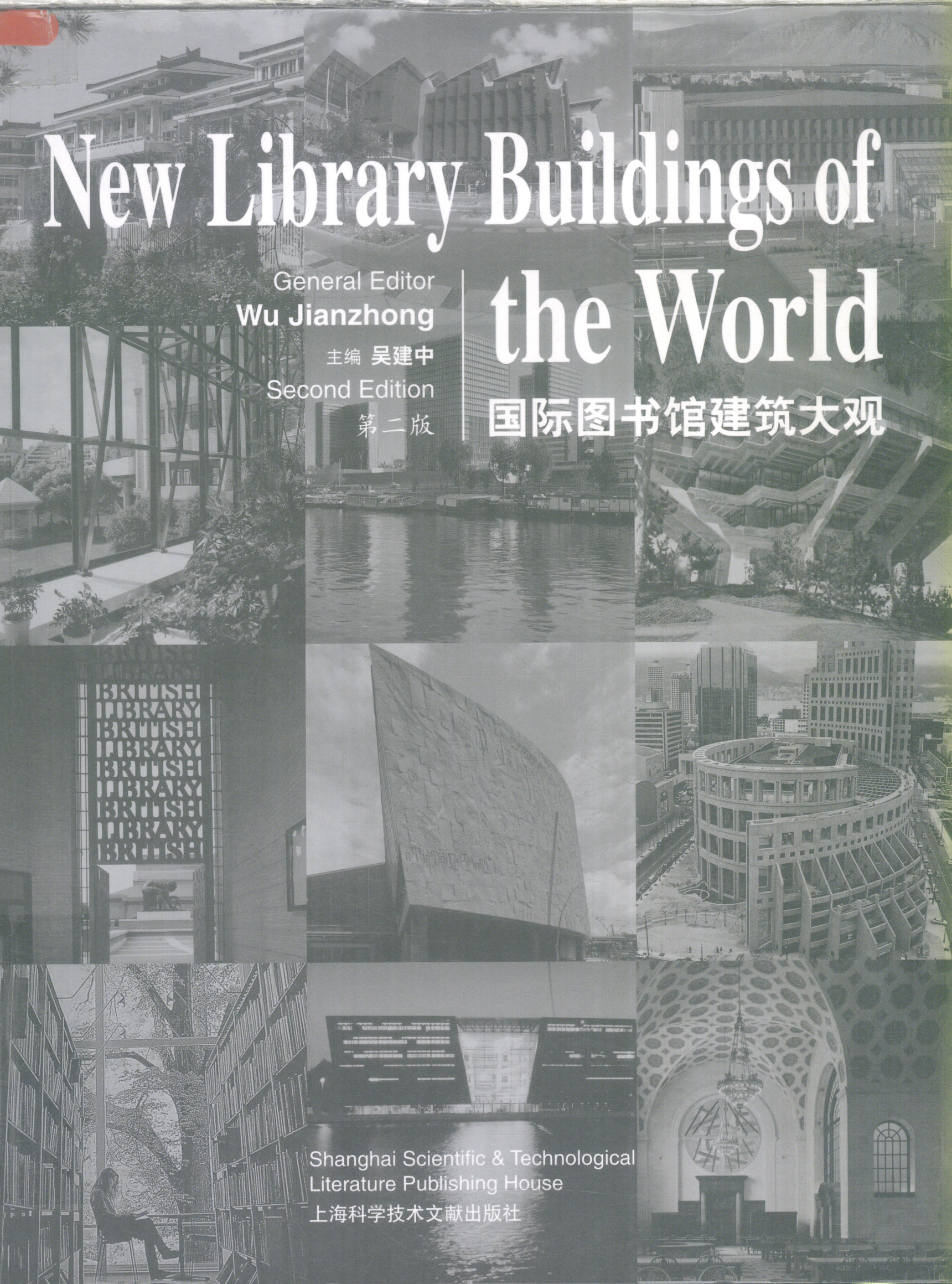
General Editor  
Wu Jianzhong

主编 吴建中

Second Edition

第二版

国际图书馆建筑大观



Shanghai Scientific & Technological  
Literature Publishing House  
上海科学技术文献出版社



G258.9/2

2003

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图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

国际图书馆建筑大观 / 吴建中主编。— 2 版— 上海:  
上海科学技术文献出版社, 2003.7  
ISBN 7-5439-2115-4

I. 国... II. 吴... III. 图书馆建筑—简介—世界 IV. TU242.3

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2003) 第 047478 号

The book is published for IFLA by the Shanghai  
Scientific & Technological Literature Publishing House

责任编辑: 曹文青  
书籍设计: 一步设计工作室

国际图书馆建筑大观 (第二版)  
NEW LIBRARY BUILDINGS OF THE WORLD  
(Second Edition)  
吴建中 主编

上海科学技术文献出版社出版发行  
(上海市武康路 2 号 邮政编码 200031)

全国新华书店经销  
广东省博罗园洲勤达印务有限公司印刷

开本 635 × 965 1/8  
印张 29  
字数 590 千字  
2003 年 7 月第 2 版  
2003 年 7 月第 1 次印刷  
印数: 1-2100  
ISBN 7-5439-2115-4/T · 726

定价: 218.00 元

***New Library Buildings of the World*** (Second Edition) has collected 100 famous library buildings from 39 countries. Following the principles established by the IFLA Library Buildings and Equipment Section, this publication has revised and improved its 1999 edition and added 44 new libraries. With beautiful pictures and detailed descriptions, it demonstrates the brilliant achievements of international library development and the perfect combination of architecture and culture in the past 20 years. This book has Dr. Wu Jianzhong as its General Editor, and over 20 library and architectural experts participated in its editing work. Ms. Kay Raseroka, President (2003-2005) of IFLA wrote a preface for this book.



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# *Preface*

It is an honour to be afforded an opportunity to be associated with the second edition of the *New Library Buildings of the World*. This edition arose out of the wish, by the Section of the Library Buildings and Equipment, to eliminate the limitations identified in the landmark work which documented library buildings constructed in the different parts of the World in the last twenty years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The choice of library buildings for inclusion in the second edition benefits from the experience gained in the selection process of the first edition. It is further enriched by the scrutiny and comments of the International Editorial Committee, the majority of whom are experienced members of the Section of the Library Buildings and Equipment.

At a time when the advent of the Internet and ease of accessibility of a plethora of information through information communication technologies, should, according to prediction, spell the demise of libraries, the subject of this book indicates otherwise.

There is an apparent need for increased organisation of information both to afford freedom of access to information to the World's Communities and free access to information, made possible through libraries, hence the notable library building construction activities worldwide. Given the spontaneous library building construction activities worldwide, and the process for soliciting submissions, it is likely that there are omissions of what may be judged as outstanding library buildings. However, through the inclusion of selections from the first edition and the addition of a broadly representative coverage in regional, types of libraries and styles, the second edition provides potential for an exciting array of design. Whilst these buildings are planned according to shared goals and ethos, they are, however, affected by different contexts and external influences.

Readers are invited to enjoy the variety and assess for themselves how well each design meets the common challenges: integration of the various information media for the benefit of the reader whilst facilitating suitable and seamless incorporation of information communication infrastructures that facilitate the speed of information transmission and influence the pace of the emergence of the knowledge society. The result documents, in broad terms, an interesting era of information developments through library design.

Kay Raseroka  
President (2003-2005), International Federation of  
Library Associations and Institutions  
May 2003



# *The Editor's Note (the First Edition)*

The library is a treasure house of human civilization and also the reflection of a country's or region's level of development and cultural activities. Whether in ancient times or today, people have always regarded books as something very special, and the buildings that house books as temples of knowledge and culture. For more than 1,000 years, no matter how the nature and functions of the library have changed, architects have understood that the physical entity of the library should be a symbolic cultural building. The buildings of ancient book repositories and the buildings of modern libraries are all like eternal art works, recording the history of civilization of different ages and different regions.

In the 1970s and 1980s some people believed that libraries would disappear, but today, at the end of the 1990s, libraries still exist and are actually moving from strength to strength. Now we can see the magnificent buildings of modern libraries springing up in many places, from London to Shanghai, from Southeast Asia to East Africa. Recalling the history of library development in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Dr. Brian Lang, chief executive of the British Library, said: "The closing decade will be recalled as a time of great new library buildings. The national libraries of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Denmark are all opening new buildings; some of them, as in Paris and London, are monumental in scale, the largest public buildings of the century in each country."

The past 20 years have been the most brilliant decades in the history of library development, and people today recognize that libraries are becoming indispensable social and cultural institutions. The magnificent buildings, and the rich and lively activities within them, indicate the almost infinite potential of library functions. Today's library not only fulfills people's requirement for reading, but also their needs for information, education and entertainment. It has become the center for preserving and disseminating knowledge, and the center for education, and culture and recreation.

Today, more people realize the cultural implications and social values of library buildings. Mr. P.J.Th. Schoots pointed out at the international symposium held for the opening of the Shanghai Library: "A main library as here in Shanghai has more tasks than only provide information. It is a temple of culture and information, where citizens of the city come for information, education and recreation." Dr. L. Voogt also said that "there will be a continuing role for the library building. Public libraries, in particular, will demonstrate a growing society role. They will be enjoyed as central and valued community meeting space, will act as an integrator within the communities, crossing barriers of race and language, and a focus of community information."

The Bibliothèque nationale de France stands on the side of the Seine. It consists of four towers that appear like open books, with a green forest in the middle of the complex. Sitting in the large reading room and looking out of the windows, readers feel that they are being embraced by nature. Many people criticized this building as something that is attractive but not very useful, but now it has become a temple of knowledge for the people in Paris, and the former President F. Mitterrand regarded it as one of the miracles of this century.

The new building of the Shanghai Library, with a total space of 83,000m<sup>2</sup>, is one of the city's ten cultural landmarks. It is composed of two towers and a podium of five stories. The two high-rise towers culminate in pyramids, representing the accumulation of culture and people's effort in scaling the height of knowledge. Now more than 10,000 people visit and use the library daily. It has become one of the most attractive cultural spots in Shanghai.



It is not very difficult to see that new library buildings pay more attention to the combination of aesthetic values and functions. Different from the ancient buildings for book storage, today's libraries not only have to consider their image, but also the facility of information provision. Many architects have realized that a library is a meeting place for people of different backgrounds. Accordingly, the design of a new library building should not over-emphasize architectural style, but should consider such facts as how to create a welcoming and comfortable environment.

The new building of the British Library has made a full display of the combination of architectural style and interior function. It does not have a luxurious and magnificent building as some other large libraries, but people immediately feel they are in a palace of knowledge when they enter the piazza. The whole building represents the people-centered architectural ideal. The various aspects, such as the arrangement of space, the display of furniture and the use of light, all take the reader's comfort and convenience into consideration.

The Osaka Municipal Central Library and the Osaka Prefectural Central Library are two new buildings of 30,000 m<sup>2</sup> that were opened in 1996. The Municipal Library is close to the subway station, giving the city residents a feeling of ready access. The Prefectural Library pays more attention to research and the provision of resources for other libraries. This building looks like a stack of books piled on top of one another, conveying a sense of solidity and strength. It is unique to build two large scale libraries in the same place and at the same time, and it shows that the Osaka governments pay much attention to the construction of basic cultural institutions and the position and function of libraries in the social development.

Unlike other cultural institutions, a library does not seek to present a gorgeous ornamental façade, but pays more attention to an image of natural elegance. Many library buildings use simple materials and colors. The Bibliothèque nationale de France uses only four basic building materials -- steel, wood, concrete and glass. Bookshelves, partitions and lamp frames are made of wood of the same color. Ceilings, ventilation pipes, lights and gates are all decorated with stainless steel. The façades of the four towers and the podiums all have large glass windows. The new building of the Deutsche Bibliothek in Frankfurt am Main also uses the same four basic materials. Different from the older, solemn and magnificent European buildings, the new library buildings tend to have a natural and simple look, giving people a sense of intimacy and warmth. The new building of the Municipal Library of The Hague uses white as a key colour. All the walls are painted white symbolizing purity and elegance.

Modular structures are often used in the design and construction of new library buildings. In the past the design of a library gave more consideration to the capacity of the building. The multi-tier bookshelf structure invented more than a century ago had a leading position in the library building design, because of its ability to store large quantities of books in a compact space. But now more libraries have begun to adopt a modular structure, consisting of large spaces with flexible partitions. The old libraries had rather narrow functions, focusing on storage and circulation, so most of their areas had a fixed single task. But with the change of the library's social function, the increased emphasis on information exchange and effects of modern technology, new library buildings are becoming much more flexible and elastic in the use of space.

Many new libraries pay particular attention to the application of modern technology. Both the libraries of Göttingen University



and the Tilburg University appear simple in structure, but within they house highly sophisticated automation systems, and their interior design emphasizes the combination of aesthetic value and practical functions. In recent years, 'intelligent architecture' has come to characterize the design of new library buildings. This new technology combines intelligent computer technology, communication technology, multi-media technology and modern architectural styles.

To sum up, the people-centered concept has come to dominate the philosophy of modern library architecture. Whether it is Fulkener-Brown's Ten Commandments or Dowlin's Law, they all emphasize people as the center of the library building. With the multiple functions and the application of high technology, the people-centered idea will continue to dominate library design for the foreseeable future.

To display the achievements of library architecture in the world in the past 20 years, and to present a gift to the 11<sup>th</sup> International Seminar on Library Buildings, or more exactly, to welcome the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this book collects together views of new library buildings around the world built since the 1980s. We hope people will not only find in this book the brilliant achievements of global library development, but also appreciate the excellent buildings that reflect different nation's cultural traditions and architectural styles.

Under the guidance of Ms. Maija Berndtson, Chairperson, Ms. Marie-Francoise Bisbrouck, Secretary of IFLA Section on Library Buildings and Equipment and Professor Ma Yuanliang, Director of the Shanghai Library, we conducted a survey in October 1998 of libraries in many countries, collecting materials and pictures in order to compile this book. We also contacted the library associations in various countries and regions and asked them to recommend excellent library buildings constructed in the last 20 years. Then we sent questionnaires to the recommended new libraries. To support our work, some libraries even had professional photographers take photos of the library buildings and sent us copies. Here we want to express our regret for the worthy libraries that are not covered in this compendium, due in particular to delays in mailing and other reasons.

During the process of compiling this book, we received great help from many experts and colleagues. Ms. Christine Deschamps, President of IFLA, and Ms. Maija Berndtson both wrote prefaces for this book. Ms. Maija Berndtson and Ms. Marie-Francoise Bisbrouck designed two questionnaires for the survey. Mr. Ye Baodi, the former Head of the Department of Photography and Copies in the Shanghai Library, rephotographed all the pictures of the library buildings, BaoYanming, Liang Su, Lu Ning, Shi Hongru and Zhang Leibo of the Shanghai Library helped to write and translate some of the entries in this book. To all of these we express our heartfelt thanks. We are sorry that some of the pictures in this book are not as clear as they should be due to the fact that they were based on electronic images. Any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the compilers, and we would appreciate corrections from our readers.

Dr. Wu Jianzhong  
Shanghai Library, China  
July 1999

# *The Editor's Note for the Second Edition*

*New Library Buildings of the World* was first published in August 1999, when the 11<sup>th</sup> IFLA Seminar on Library Buildings was held at the Shanghai Library. This book was well received by librarians and architects. Many experts regarded it as the first book that gave a rather complete review of new library buildings in the world and also as a book that demonstrated the achievements of library development in the last 20 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time, some experts also pointed out the limitations of this book, such as there was a lack of balance between the areas it covered and a lack of varieties, and some excellent library buildings were not collected into the book. Many people have expressed their hope that we should publish a second edition of this book, to have this book revised and to meet the demands of the present time.

Thanks to the support and help of our colleagues from the IFLA Library Buildings and Equipment Section, the publication of the second edition of this book was listed as a part of the Section's 2001 - 2003 Strategic Plan, which received the formal recognition at the Section's business meeting in August 2002.

Mr. Barton M. Clark, Chairman of the IFLA Library Buildings and Equipment Section has given his support to this book and agreed to be the Advisor of its second edition. He wrote a letter to libraries, asking for submitting information about their new buildings. Many Section Standing Committee members have agreed to be the editorial committee members of this book. They have done a large amount of work in selecting and recommending new library buildings. The editorial committee has also invited some architects and librarians to be its members.

It took us about eight months to collect information. We posted the questionnaires on the IFLA-L and also sent out over 200 questionnaires by mail. We have received responses from about 150 libraries and architectural firms. Based on careful studies of the responses and information about other library buildings that are highly recommendable, the editorial team made three lists of new library buildings, including the libraries selected from the first edition, additional libraries selected by the editorial team and the libraries recommended by the editorial committee members. These lists were sent to the editorial committee members for comments. The editorial committee and the editors have finally agreed that the second edition of the *New Library Buildings of the World* would contain 100 libraries, among which 56 are from the first edition and 44 are new additions.

The successful publication of this book owes much to the support and advises from various aspects. Ms. Kay Raseroka, President of IFLA (2003-2005), wrote a preface to this new edition. Ms. Marian Koren and Ms. Rashidah Begum bt. Fazal Mohamed helped to select and recommend libraries in their areas. They have also offered very useful advises.

The successful publication of this book owes much to the diligent work of the editorial team from the Shanghai Library, including Wu Jianming (head of the Professional Office), Feng Jieyin (reference librarian), Ren Xiapei (information specialist), Shen Liyun (head of the International Exchange Office) and Cao Wenqing (specialist of intellectual property rights). We encountered certain difficulties during the process of the editing work, partially due to the inconvenience of communication. To ensure the high quality of pictures, we ask the libraries to send us printed photos by postal service, which sometimes took a few months. To make sure that important library buildings would be listed in the book, the editors took it upon themselves to search information online or from printed resources. We even sought help from our friends, asking them to provide useful information. Due to such difficulties,



the deadline was postponed several times. The members of the editorial committee helped to check the data and information with caution and patience, to ensure the quality and speed of publication. In addition, the Yibu Design Studio appointed their most talented young artist Mr. Zhang Guoliang to be the artistic designer, adding esthetic value to this book.

The successful publication of this book owes much to the support of various libraries. Many libraries provided information about their new buildings and sent us beautiful photos. Some libraries first sent digital photos by email, and then sent enlarged printed photos by postal service, to make sure we could have high-quality pictures in our publication. Some libraries even sent the photos by express mail, so that we could have this book published in time.

Finally, the publication received support from IFLA Publication Committee. In addition, Ms. Claudia Lux and Mr. Sjoerd Koopman have showed their great concern for the publication of this book and gave useful advices. They helped to decide that this book was published for IFLA by the Shanghai Scientific & Technological Literature Publishing House, as a publication under the auspices of IFLA.

Due to the limit of time and abilities, there may be some errors or omissions in this book. We appreciate corrections from our readers.

Dr. Wu Jianzhong  
Director, Shanghai Library, China  
April 27, 2003



# Contents

## Australia

State Library of Victoria .....	2
University of the Sunshine Coast Library .....	4

## Austria

State Library of Lower Austria .....	8
--------------------------------------	---

## Belgium

Kris Lambert, Public Library Oostende .....	10
---------------------------------------------	----

## Canada

Bibliothèque nationale du Québec .....	12
Vancouver Public Library Central Branch .....	14
University of British Columbia Walter C. Koerner Library .....	16

## China

National Library of China .....	18
Shanghai Library .....	22
Capital Library .....	26
Shaanxi Library .....	28
Shandong Provincial Library .....	30
Yunnan Provincial Library .....	32
Zhejiang Library .....	34
Shenzhen Library .....	36
Suzhou Library .....	38
Xiamen Municipal Library .....	40
Peking University Library .....	42
Library of Chinese Academy of Sciences .....	44
Hong Kong Central Library .....	46
Mong Man Wai Library, Hong Kong Institute of Education .....	48
Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Library .....	50
Taiwan Tamkang University Chueh Sheng Memorial Library .....	52



## Colombia

Tintal Public Library, Biblored .....	54
Tunal Public Library, Biblored .....	56
Virgilio Barco Public Library, Biblored .....	58

## Croatia

National and University Library of Croatia .....	60
--------------------------------------------------	----

## Czech Republic

Research Library in Liberec .....	62
Palacky University Library .....	64

## Denmark

The Royal Library, Denmark .....	66
Aalborg University Library .....	68
Danish Veterinary and Agricultural Library of the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University .....	70
Roskilde University Library .....	72

## Egypt

Bibliotheca Alexandrina .....	74
-------------------------------	----

## Estonia

National Library of Estonia .....	78
-----------------------------------	----

## Finland

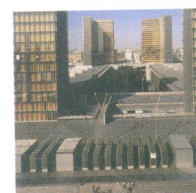
National Library of Health Sciences of Finland .....	80
Lahti City Library .....	82
Viikki Science Library .....	84

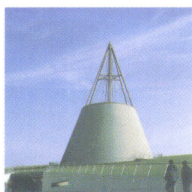
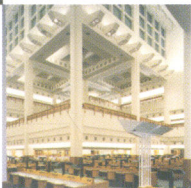
## France

Bibliothèque nationale de France, François-Mitterrand Site .....	86
------------------------------------------------------------------	----

## Germany

Die Deutsche Bibliothek Frankfurt am Main .....	90
City Library of Darmstadt .....	92
Media Library of the Köln City Library .....	94
Public Library of the City of Münster .....	96





## Iceland

National and University Library of Iceland ..... 98

## Ireland

John and Aileen O'Reilly Library, Dublin City University ..... 102

## Israel

Tel Aviv University Gitter-Smolatz Library of Life Sciences and  
Medicine ..... 105

## Italy

Sala Borsa Library ..... 106

## Japan

Osaka Municipal Central Library ..... 108

Osaka Prefectural Central Library ..... 110

Yokohama City Central Library ..... 112

## Republic of Korea

National Library of Korea ..... 114

National Assembly Library of Korea ..... 116

## Malaysia

National Library of Malaysia ..... 118

Miri Library ..... 120

Sarawak State Library ..... 121

## Mexico

Centro de Informacion Tecnologica, Instituto de  
Investigaciones Electricas ..... 122

## Namibia

Information and Learning Resource Center, University of  
Namibia ..... 124

## Netherlands

Amstelveen Public Library ..... 126



Eindhoven Public Library .....	130
Municipal Library of the Hague .....	132
Huizen Public Library .....	134
Maastricht City Library .....	136
Nijmegen Central Public Library .....	138
Delft University of Technology Library .....	140

## Norway

University of Oslo Library .....	142
Tonsberg and Natteroy Public Library .....	144

## Romania

Central University Library of Bucharest .....	146
-----------------------------------------------	-----

## Russia

National Library of Russia (New Building) .....	148
-------------------------------------------------	-----

## Senegal

Library of Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar .....	150
-------------------------------------------------------	-----

## Singapore

Woodlands Regional Library .....	152
----------------------------------	-----

## Slovenia

National and University Library of Slovenia .....	155
---------------------------------------------------	-----

## South Africa

University of South Africa, Samuel Pauw Library .....	156
-------------------------------------------------------	-----

## Spain

Library of Catalonia .....	158
Biblioteca de Comunicació i Hemeroteca General .....	161
Lleida Public Library .....	162
Murcia Regional Library .....	164

## Sweden

The Royal Library, National Library of Sweden .....	166
-----------------------------------------------------	-----





Economic Library, Göteborg University Library .....	168
Malmö City Library .....	170

## Thailand

Thammasat University Libraries, Pridi Baromyong Library .....	172
---------------------------------------------------------------	-----

## Trinidad and Tobago

National Library of Trinidad and Tobago .....	173
-----------------------------------------------	-----

## Turkey

Bilkent University Library .....	174
----------------------------------	-----

## United Kingdom

The British Library .....	176
National Library of Scotland .....	180
British Library of Political and Economic Science .....	182
Georgina Scott Sutherland Library, Robert Gordon University...	184
Lanchester Library .....	186
Maughan Library & Information Services Center, King's College London .....	188
St Peter's Library, University of Sunderland .....	190

## United States

Boston Public Library, Hyde Park Branch .....	192
Cleveland Public Library .....	194
Denver Public Library, Central Library .....	198
Kalamazoo Public Library, Central Library .....	200
New York Public Library, Science, Industry and Business Library ...	204
Queens Borough Public Library, Flushing Branch Library .....	206
San Francisco Public Library .....	208
University of California, Irvine, Science Library .....	210
University of California, San Diego Academic Research Library .....	212
Washington State University, Holland/ New Library .....	214

## Yugoslavia

Matica Srpska Library .....	216
-----------------------------	-----



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