Abstract:
This Guangzhou is one of southern China’s largest cities and has a long tradition of being the city through which the world gained access to China. As a result of the city’s status as a quickly growing international metropolis with a wide variety of economic opportunities, it boasts a culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse population. To best serve Guangzhou’s diverse population, the Guangzhou library has become a unique multicultural community space for the city. After the new facility was opened in December of 2012, and the 2011-2015 Development Plan was implemented, a number of new service areas, services, and multicultural programs were opened to better serve the Guangzhou Library’s diverse population of readers. The new service areas include the Multiculture Library, the Language Learning Library, and the Library of the People and Culture of Guangzhou. Within the aforementioned service areas, the library offers multilingual collections, programs developed for both Chinese readers, international readers, and a combination of both groups. The new service areas also serve as the home to the library’s international communication and exchange programs. Within the context of multicultural library practices in China, the following paper discusses the development and implementation of the new programs and activities and the library’s achievements thus far.
With the prospect of a new facility for the Guangzhou Library, there was a unique opportunity to evaluate existing services and create a new set of services and service areas that would allow the library to better serve the information needs of the people of Guangzhou. When the new facility opened in December of 2012 and the Guangzhou Library’s 2011-2015 Development Plan was implemented, the opportunities envisioned were finally realized. As Guangzhou is an ever-growing city with a population consisting of the local Cantonese, residents from each of China’s provinces, and citizens from numerous nations, it is essential that the library offer services geared toward both Guangzhou’s Chinese and international residents. According to the Guangzhou Library’s 2011-2015 Development Plan, the library will build upon existing and create new multilingual collections, create spaces and opportunities for communication and exchange, offer a wide variety of programming, and foster relationships with international libraries, cultural institutions, and government agencies concerned with the sharing of culture. To facilitate the implementation of the library’s development plan, the Multiculture Library, the Language Learning Library, The Library of the People and Culture of Guangzhou were established. The goal of the aforementioned service areas is to ensure that the library’s diverse population of readers has materials and services suited for their needs.

While multicultural libraries and services in nations that receive large numbers of immigrants are suited in large part to acclimate newcomers to the culture and norms of the host nation, the Guangzhou Library’s approach consists of creating opportunities for Chinese readers to learn about other countries, cultures, and languages through multilingual collections and cultural programming that brings them together with members of other cultures in an open, safe, and equal environment created specifically to foster communication and exchange. Additionally, library services geared toward Guangzhou’s international residents enable them to access resources in over ten languages, participate in programs on local and international cultures, and become members of the Library’s community of readers.

1. The international and local context

1.1 International context

In the early 1980s', a series of principles and guidelines concerning multicultural library services was proposed by IFLA. At the same time, libraries in the United States, Canada, and Australia created their own policies to serve culturally diverse users. From then on, the “multicultural library” has been an issue under discussion in international circles.

In China, however, it was not until the early 21st century that the concept of multicultural library services entered library discourse. The first paper on this topic published in mainland China, “The Objectives and Strategies of Library Multicultural Services: From Australian Rules and Regulations to IFLA’s Multicultural Communities: Guidelines for Library Services”, was written by Bao Yanming and the Japanese scholar 深井耀子 in 2000. With the release of the “IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto” in 2008, an increasing number of scholars in China started to do research in this field. In 2009, the project “Theoretical Research and Practical Application of Library Services against the Multicultural Background” was listed as one of the National Social Science Fund projects by the National

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Office of Philosophy and Social Science. This can be regarded as the point at which the “multicultural library” concept began to receive attention in Chinese library circles.

1.2 Local context
With rapid economic development, many cities in China have been undergoing the process of modernization. As a result, the population of provincial and international residents has been growing, thus the cities have become increasingly diverse, culturally, ethnically and linguistically. As one of the fastest growing cities in China, Guangzhou is no exception. According to official statistics, up to the middle of 2012, there were around 34,000 permanent foreign residents in Guangzhou. International residents of Guangzhou holding temporary resident visas are far more in number. Data shows that during the first half of 2012, more than one million international residents have lived temporarily in Guangzhou. According to data released by the Foreign Affairs Office of the Guangzhou Municipal Government, in March 2013, there were consulates general of 47 different countries in Guangzhou.

Apart from the international population, Guangzhou receives millions of immigrant workers from the neighboring provinces each year. According to the 6th nationwide census taken in November 2011, about one third of the permanent residents in Guangzhou came from other provinces.

Wu Jianzhong, director of the Shanghai Library stated that “A city is a fusion of different people with different ethnical and cultural backgrounds. It should be such a place that the glamour and the creative power of every culture can be put into full play.” With such a large number of immigrants, it is impossible to ignore the confluence of cultures. This is what first prompted the Guangzhou library to serve the diverse populations.

In addition to the immigrant population, the number of emigrants from Guangdong province is also high. As a traditional immigrant-producing province, Guangdong accounted for half of the immigrants going abroad in 2009. Moreover, one third of the immigrants came from Guangzhou. In 2009, Guangzhou, Foshan, and Dongguan have supplied up to 1,500 immigrants to the United States and Canada.

In accordance with the numbers published by the Guangzhou Municipal Government, generally speaking, the Guangzhou Library’s multicultural services are geared toward three distinct groups of readers: Foreign residents, immigrant workers from other provinces, and native residents.

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2. Application of multicultural library services in Shanghai and Guangzhou

As previously mentioned, public libraries in China have become aware of the necessity to open multicultural services under the backdrop of development and modernization. However, there are still no official guidelines in China. In practice, libraries are inclined to adopt strategies that apply to the local situation. Therefore in some cities, local libraries have generated their own service models in order to meet the information needs of that city’s diverse population.

2.1 The Shanghai Library’s service model

Shanghai is an international metropolis with a large number of foreign residents. The Shanghai Library was the first public library in China to provide services to foreign people and organizations. Last year, the “Multiculture·People·Library Services: International Seminar on Libraries’ Multiculture Services” coincided with the 2013 Library Society of China’s Annual Conference in Shanghai. At the seminar, the Shanghai Library shared their experiences with their domestic and international counterparts. The Library boasts a variety of collections in 20 different languages, and for the convenience of international readers, the library service guide and website are also multilingual. Additionally, it preserves UN documents, has both German and Australian exchange collections, and holds the “Getting Together in Shanghai” activity which is aimed specifically at the city’s international residents. As a pioneer among Chinese public libraries, the Shanghai Library has set an example in the field of multicultural services for other major metropolitan Chinese public libraries.

2.2 Guangzhou Library’s service model

The “IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto” states that “Cultural and linguistic diversity is the common heritage of humankind and should be cherished and preserved for the
benefit of all.” Moreover, “libraries of all types should reflect, support and promote cultural and linguistic diversity at the international, national, and local levels, and thus work for cross-cultural dialogue and active citizenship.” According to the Guangzhou Library’s 2011-2015 Development Plan, promoting multicultural services and advancing multicultural communication is one of the library’s five major objectives. To realize this objective and to conform to the various needs of different groups, the library has implemented a plan that not only supports the information and communication needs of our users, but also supports local, national, and international cooperation.

We have established multiple new service areas and special collections and implemented new activities and numerous programs. These newly implemented services areas, programs, and collections have a three-fold purpose. First, we aim to establish a window through which Chinese readers can view and better understand the different cultures and countries of the world. Secondly, we aim to establish a space to which our international residents can come in order to learn about Chinese and Cantonese culture, access materials in their native languages, and become participants in our community of readers. Lastly, we aim to establish a welcoming, neutral, safe space where all of our readers can come together to share, communicate, and learn from one another.

3.1 Multiculture Library

3.1.1 Objectives
The Multiculture Library was established in order to both house our multilingual and country-themed collections. The service area is at the center of our local and international cooperation projects and activities such as exhibitions, lectures, discussion forums, inter-library cooperation projects, and local institution cooperation projects. The Multiculture Library is dedicated to promoting the public's awareness and understanding of Chinese and world cultures.

ILFA contends that libraries “play an important role in education, social engagement and global understanding,” and as a reflection of the needs of the populations they serve, libraries are learning centers, cultural centers, and information centers. In striving to meet those needs, we offer books, periodicals, and audio-visual materials in numerous languages, and through our programs and activities, we bring together the various cultural communities in Guangzhou for communication and exchange.

3.1.2 Collections
Consisting mostly of the materials in our “country-themed” areas, the collection in the Multiculture Library aims to serve the diverse community of readers in Guangzhou. As part of the Sister City Library Project, our country-themed areas have a two-fold purpose. First, the area was established to house the collections acquired as a result of our on-going relationships with our sister cities. Materials acquired from donations or exchanges with our sister city libraries, are generally housed in the country-themed areas. Donations from foreign consulates and other agencies in Guangzhou are also housed in this area. Secondly, the country-themed areas contain works in 10 languages ranging from subjects such as art,

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education, government and law, history, literature, religion and philosophy to travel and cookery which provide our international readers with access to materials in their native languages.

3.1.3 Programs
The bi-monthly “Trip Around the World” project has been held in the Multiculture Library since September 2013. The project is designed to showcase the essence of different cultures through a series of activities. The program generally includes the following five activities: a country-themed exhibition, a lecture series, Living Library and book sharing activities, and the “World Theater” film appreciation activity. These activities can be integrated into a country-themed project, or they can be implemented independently.

3.1.3.1 Developing and implementing the project
As of April 2014, the “Trip Around the World” Project has been held four times. We have introduced Mexican, Canadian and French cultures to our users. Upcoming projects will concentrate on India, New Zealand, the United States, and England. Generally speaking, the development of a country-themed project includes the following four procedures:

1.3.2 Case analysis:
We held the “Trip Around the World, Stop 2: Nostalgia for the Other Shore” program in November, 2013. The program focused on the history of Chinese immigration to Canada. It consisted of an exhibition, two lectures, the Living Library activity and the book sharing activities. The exhibition was designed based on one Chinese family’s immigration story in Canada. Ms. Denise Chong, a Canadian author of Chinese descent, and the author of The...
Concubine’s Children, offered her family’s story to serve as the blueprint of the exhibition. Moreover, we also received the assistance of Dr. David Chuenyan Lai and other researchers of the history of Chinese immigration to Canada, including those from the Vancouver Public Library, the Guangdong University of Foreign Studies Canada Research Center, and the Canadian Consulate General in Guangzhou. Each provided us with a generous amount of source materials. Apart from the family story of Ms. Denise Chong, historical photos and other representative works written by Chinese Canadian writers were displayed on the occasion.

Launched in July 2013, the Living Library activity allows hosts to share their experiences and opinions with readers. This activity is aimed at facilitating dialogue and creating an opportunity for understanding cultural difference. In the image below, a Canadian oral English teacher discusses his experience with the educational system in Canada with a group of readers.

The book sharing activity is also one part of the “Trip Around the World” project. The first activity was held on November 30, 2013. A librarian from the Guangzhou Library, Sam Boss,

The additional three projects concentrated on the art and culture of Mexico and France. As of April 2014, we have held a total of twenty six activities for the “Trip Around the World” project. Thirty six guest speakers have been invited to host activities, such as lectures, the Living Library and the book sharing activities. Twenty two hosts were international residents of Guangzhou. In total, these activities were attended by approximately 15,000 readers. Through the activities, we have also established cooperative relationships with both domestic and international cultural and educational organizations.
French designers sharing ideas
Guangzhou Library, 2014

A fusion of Chinese and French design - The French Exhibition
Guangzhou Library, 2014

“Learning French by Playing”
Guangzhou Library, 2014
3.2 Library of the People and Culture of Guangzhou (LPCG)

3.2.1 Objectives
This service area focuses on the promotion and preservation of Cantonese culture through a collection of local materials, activities, and projects. The goal of the service area is to develop special topic services, conserve cultural heritage, and promote Lingnan Culture. With an emphasis on humanities and social science collections, the library is working to expand trade and commerce and cultural exchange, the acknowledgment of notable Guangzhou residents, local history, *The Guangzhou Encyclopedia*, and genealogy services. The library is dedicated to preserving Cantonese culture and offering research services on local cultural topics.

3.2.2 Collections
LPCG is home to the Notable Residents’ Collection and the Genealogy Research Center / Family Search. The collection includes subjects such as Guangzhou government and law, economics, history, culture, and geography. It has over 10,000 volumes and contains over 30,000 documents, periodicals, digital resources, and audio-visual materials on Guangzhou’s government and law, economics, history, and culture. The general collection provides an overall view of the history and culture of Guangzhou. The special collections include various resources such as *The Guangzhou Chronicles*, *The Guangzhou Almanac*, *The Guangzhou Statistical Yearbook*, and statistical yearbooks for each of Guangzhou’s districts. They also include documents from before 1966, *The Guangzhou Republic Daily*, memoirs of the Revolution in Guangzhou, and local periodicals.

The Notable Residents’ Collection contains works by and about Lingnan scholars, local experts, and public figures. The current holdings include works on and donated by Wang Guichen, the Liu Yisheng and Liu Sifen family, and Jiang Boqin. The Genealogy Research Center / Family Search collections include over 8,000 volumes on local genealogy. The Guangzhou Library also has access to the Utah Genealogical Society’s genealogical database.

3.2.3 Programs
To promote Cantonese culture and the Library’s Notable Residents’ Collection, the Library of the People and Culture of Guangzhou launched the “Ninth Floor Forum” program in July 2013. This program is committed to providing citizens with access to notable Lingnan scholars and their works or research. A successful series of lectures and salons has been held with the assistance of the notable residents featured in the Library’s collection.

On one occasion, thirteen representatives from a famous family of calligraphers and painters hosted the “Ninth Floor Forum”. With three generations of the family specializing in the arts, the family is famous for its contribution to the Lingnan School of painting. During the forum, there was an open discussion between the family and the readers in attendance.
Liu Sihan, a member of a well-known literary family of Guangdong Province, participated in the “Ninth Floor Forum” activity in March 2014. As an expert in classical Chinese poetry, he was invited to interpret poems written by the famous poet Su Shi. This activity attracted many local Chinese poets.
3.3 Language Learning Library (LLL)

3.3.1 Objectives
In Accordance with IFLA’s guidelines for multicultural library services, the Guangzhou Library established the Language Learning Library in order to provide learning resources for not only languages and dialects spoken in China, but also numerous world languages. Our services currently focus on language learning resources for native Chinese speakers, but we are planning a Cantonese language education program for both Chinese readers from other provinces and international readers.

3.3.2 Collections
LLL is Guangzhou Library’s home for all types of language learning resources. Consisting of four primary sections, we offer books, periodicals, audio-visual materials, and multi-media resources in numerous languages. Our periodicals collection contains more than forty different language learning publications, and our audio-visual materials section contains over 7,000 different materials. Through computers in the Multimedia Language Study Area, readers can access our language study resources databases, video-on-demand, and online language learning resources.

3.3.3 Programs
The Guangzhou Library’s English Corner is LLL’s regularly scheduled activity. Each month, the English Corner has multiple themed activities including a salon, a lecture series and the English Language Film Appreciation and Discussion.

The “WTalk” English Salon is held in Guangzhou Library’s Reading Experience Area, is organized in cooperation with students from the Guangzhou University of Foreign Studies, the Multiculture Library, and the Language Learning Library. The WTalk salon is a platform for English learners and native speakers to come together for practicing English and sharing stories. Each week a different theme is selected as the basis for the discussion activities. The salon includes a lesson-based portion called “Daily English with Sam”, as well as games and activities to reinforce what was addressed in the lesson-based portion of the activity. The third portion of the Guangzhou Library’s English Club, the “Learn English from a Master” Lecture Series, is a platform for inviting local and international experts and teachers to speak to our readers on English language education related subjects.

3.4 Inter-department programs

3.4.1 The “Window of Guangzhou” Project
The Guangzhou Library is now in the process of establishing the “Window of Guangzhou” area to exhibit the “image” of Guangzhou to our local and international residents. The area will hold a collection of books and audio-visual materials that reflect the city’s cultural characteristics. We will select both Chinese and foreign languages materials for the collection. In addition, the area will also serve as an information center where foreign residents and immigrant workers can obtain information on living in Guangzhou. The “Window of Guangzhou” project will also be a platform for the exchange between Guangzhou and its international sister cities.

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3.4.2 “Interact with Sam”: Activities aimed at international residents

We recently started two programs to help international residents get better acquainted with our services and collections and to help them become active members of our library community. The first program, a bilingual storytime activity for children ages 3-6, is a cooperative effort between the Multiculture Library and the Family Reading Library.

The bilingual storytime activity consists of reading stories in Chinese and in English, singing songs, and oftentimes making simple crafts. As the activity gives both Chinese and international children the opportunity to practice a second language, it is a benefit to both local and international readers. Through reading in two languages, the activity aims to enhance second language acquisition at a most opportune time in the lives of young readers. Additionally, for international readers, it gives both the parent and child an opportunity to meet and engage with local Chinese families.
The second program is an English language library tour designed specifically for the international community in Guangzhou. Since January of 2014, we have given tours to both student groups and local expatriate social clubs. The library tour allows readers to become acquainted with our collections, service areas, and activities. During the tour, participants learn how to discover and take part in library programs and activities and locate and borrow Chinese and foreign language materials. The tour concludes with the participants receiving a library card.

Since the new facility opened in 2012 and the library’s new services, service areas, and programs were opened, local and international readers have had access to a wide variety of new multicultural programs including the “Trip Around The World” project, a project which includes a country-themed exhibition, a lecture series, and the Living Library and Book Sharing activities, a bilingual story time activity for children, language education programs, group library tours for local international schools and social groups, and programs based on highlighting Cantonese and Lingnan culture. At the same time, the library has also moved forward with international cooperation projects. In addition to existing relationships with libraries in South Korea and Japan, relationships with libraries in Canada, England, France, and the United States have resulted in book exchanges and exhibitions. Furthermore, the international cooperation project has brought the library closer with numerous consulates general in Guangzhou including but not limited to the Japanese Consulate, the French Consulate, the Indian Consulate, the Mexican Consulate, the Polish Consulate, and the United States Consulate. While the services, service areas, and programs are still young in the life of the Guangzhou Library, since their establishment and implementation, the Guangzhou Library has been able to offer readers materials in over ten languages, a wide variety of multicultural programs, and a welcoming, neutral, safe space for exchange and communication.

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