

The Propagation of the Library Rights Ideology in Mainland China: A Case Study¹

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【Abstract】

This paper examines the case of “The Warmest Library in History” and discusses how the library rights ideology has been propagated in Mainland China in recent years, from the perspectives of the planning and promotion activities of professional organizations, advocacy and appeals of professional journals, the scholarship of academics, and the mass media’s reporting and influence. This study reveals how the case and the attention it received reflect the progress and positive effect of the propagation of the library rights ideology in China. The people of China have begun to be awakened to those rights, but there is a long way to go until they are fully realized, and theoretical research and practice on library rights in Mainland China are still in their infancy. It is a long-term, arduous and historical mission, and there is an urgent duty for library professionals in China to advocate for making policies on library rights, to protect and preserve those rights, to make people more conscious of those rights, and to conduct more research on library rights theory and practice. Research methods employed in this paper include case study and historical analysis.

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【Keywords】

Propagation of the library rights ideology；“The Event of the Warmest Library in History”；case study on library rights；Hangzhou Public Library.

INTRODUCTION

In January 2011, in Mainland China, while many people were on their way back home for Chinese New Year family reunions, a micro-blog message triggered a hot debate among netizens. In a very short time, it had been forwarded over sixteen thousand times and was reviewed over four thousand times (He, 2011). The message was about how Hangzhou Public Library (HPL) welcomed homeless people to use the library. Because this happened in an unusually frigid winter season when all around the country people were suffering from cold weather and traffic congestion while struggling to make their way back home for the Chinese new year celebrations, what HPL did for homeless people had made them feel much warmer. Netizens thus named HPL “The Warmest Library in History”.

This message had not only been forwarded and reviewed many times, but also caused a very heated discussion from different perspectives among the public, netizens and mass media all over the country. Scholars from different disciplines also began to conduct research on this case. Some researchers in library science conducted research on this story as a case study on library rights.

This case has lead academics and library professionals in China to ask: What are library rights? Actually the phase “library rights” originally comes from *the Library Bill of Rights* which was adopted by the American Library Association (ALA) in 1939 and last amended in 1996 (American Library Association, 1996). Based on a study of *the Library Bill of Rights*, ALA’s existing definition and ALA’s Office of Intellectual Freedom mission statement, we defined library rights as the equality and freedom of individuals to use the library. (Cheng, Pan, & Zhang, 2011).

Several library related events² took place in Mainland China between

2 More details about these library related events, please See DISCUSSION.

2004 and 2005, such as “The Event at National Library of China” (Zhou, 2004), “The Event at Xinyang Normal University Library” (He, 2004), and “The Event at Suzhou Library” (Qi, 2005), those events refer to the unpleasant experiences of the users and the criticism of library services that followed. They were exposed and reported by the mass media and made the public began to turn their eyes to libraries, library service and library rights. The events gave the public a negative impression of library service. On the contrary, “The Event of the Warmest Library in History” (EWLH) made a positive impression on the public and mass media about libraries.

The most interesting part of the story is that the original source of this message came from a report published in November 2008 that originally received very little attention (Wan, 2008). According to the report, it took place at the beginning of October 2008 when HPL’s new building opened to the public and also welcomed homeless people. A librarian at HPL confirmed that they had actually begun welcoming homeless people to use the library since 2003 (Yu, 2011). That is to say, it received much more attention and aroused much more public debate around the country two years after it was first reported, and an astonishing eight years after it happened.

The emergence of this case brought about the issues discussed in this paper. Why did it happen? What made it happen? Why is it considered a case of library rights? What is the connection between the propagation of the library rights ideology and this case? How has the library rights ideology been propagated in Mainland China? It is hypothesized that this caused so much public debate eight years after it occurred because of the propagation of the library rights ideology in Mainland China. It indicates that Chinese people have gradually been awakened to their library rights. It is the fruit of the joint effort from the library professionals, the public and the mass media, and it is also because of the propagation of the library rights ideology in Mainland China.

In the present paper, EWLH is examined. Additionally, the paper explores how the library rights ideology has been propagated in Mainland China, from the perspectives of the planning and promotion activities of professional organizations, advocacy and appeals of professional journals, the scholarship of academics, and the mass media’s reporting and influence.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research methods employed in this paper include case study and historical analysis. EWLH is discussed in depth in this paper. The details of the case and its nationwide reverberations will be described and analyzed, its implication and connection to the propagation of the library rights ideology and the case itself will be revealed. This is a typical case of the propagation of the library rights ideology, based on three following facts:

First, this case might be the most famous library related event in Mainland China. Before “The Event at National Library of China” (Zhou, 2004), the public and mass media did not pay much attention to libraries. This was the first time that libraries, library service and library rights received so much attention and were debated so fervently in such a short time. Therefore, it is a very special case that needs to be studied.

Second, this case took place in a public library and it is about homeless people and their rights to use the library. All discussion on this case, both by the new mass media and the traditional mass media, focused on the library rights of homeless people, though they talked about it in different terms, such as cultural rights, equal rights, and the right to access the library.

Third, the timing of this case and the timing of the development of the propagation of the library rights ideology is an exact match. This story actually happened in 2003, it was first reported in 2008, and became a topic of discussion in 2011. Since 2000, researchers have paid increasingly more attention to library rights, and it has become one of the most popular research topics after “The Event at the National Library of China”. Professional organizations, journals, scholars in library science and the mass media have been continually promoting and advocating for the library rights ideology between 2000 and 2010.

Historical analysis was also used in this paper. Related materials were collected by: (a) browsing the websites of professional library organizations and associations such as the Library Society of China’s (LSC) website and the websites of library societies of different provinces, seminars and activities related to library rights from 2000 to 2011; (b) investigating the conference proceedings at library and library science field; (c) exploring the columns and articles in journals and books related to library rights

by searching related databases and the annual indexes of professional periodicals in library science from 2000 to 2011, (d) examining messages, news and articles about EWLH, and collecting, synthesizing and analyzing information on scattered pieces of news both from traditional mass media and new media on the Internet, including micro-blogs, blogs and social networks. In collecting research materials for this paper, an extensive literature review was conducted.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As a result of a literature search and review, up to now case studies on library rights from the perspective of propagation of the library rights ideology in Mainland China have not yet been found.

The following literature reviews attempt to demonstrate and support the hypothesis, and will only focus on reviewing three parts: the first part is the overall research on library rights, the second part is the columns and articles in journals and books related to library rights, especially related to the propagation of the library rights ideology published in Mainland China, the third part is literature about EWLH.

In Mainland China, research on library rights started in the 2000s. Since 2004, research in the area of library rights has increased in popularity. Before 2000, the phrase “library rights” had not yet been used, and instead, phrases such as “intellectual freedom”, “library freedom”, “the right to use the library freely” and “rights of library users” were more common. (Pan, 2011). According to literature reviews in this area, Cheng Huanwen might be the originator of the phrase, “图书馆权利”, which can be translated into English as “library rights”. In July 2004, Cheng proposed and insisted that library rights should be one of the major topics at the 2005 LSC Annual Conference when he was consulted by the secretary general of LSC (Cheng, 2006). In December 2004, when they issued the Call for Papers, LSC finally decided the theme for the 2005 annual conference would be “People-oriented Innovative Services”, and the sub-themes were “Library Science from the Humanities Perspective” and “Library Rights”. Upon the announcement, Cheng explained that “library rights” refers to the right to equal access, the right to free access of materials and services, free library services, and

library services to people with special needs (Library Society of China [LSC], 2005). In January 2005, for the first time, library rights were officially discussed at the 2005 Library Society of China Summit Meeting, held at Helongjiang University, Haerbin (Bi, 2005). Since then, more and more researchers have focused on the idea of library rights and began to use the phrase “library rights”. As this phrase increased in popularity, library right has become one of the most popular research areas among library professionals in Mainland China. Since 2004, the research in this area has entered a stage of fast development. The number of articles showed a trend of rapid growth. The major topics include the theory of library rights, intellectual freedom, information equity, rights of readers, and case studies on library rights, library systems, professional ethics, and the policy of library rights.

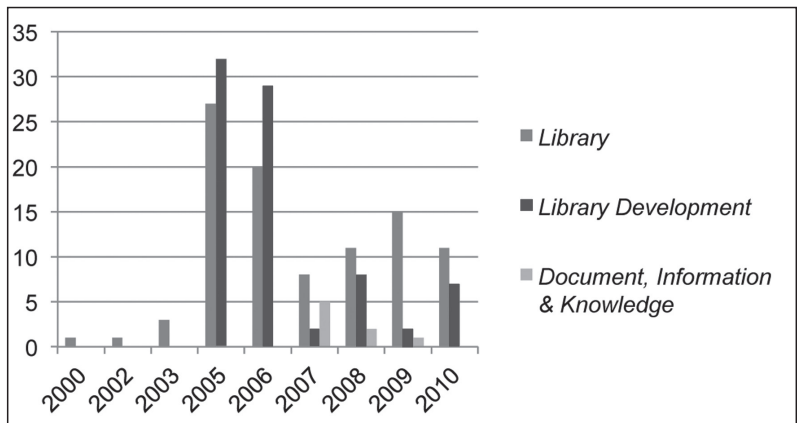
According to a literature survey, three journals, *Library*, *Library Development*, and *Document, Information & Knowledge* are especially pertinent. Each column and topic in Table 1 was determined by title of columns, and each topic was determined by title of articles and close examination of the full texts themselves. The numbers, columns and topics listed in Table 1 and Figure 1 showed the subsequent development and change of research in library science in Mainland China between 2000 and 2010: (a) Research on this area began in 2000, and reached a peak in 2005 and 2006, and then dropped. The timing of the activities organized by LSC is consistent with the research trend, and it was also the reaction in the library profession to the library related events in Mainland China which took place in 2004 and 2005. (b) Topics changed from library freedom in 2000 to knowledge freedom in 2003, and to library rights, rights of users and intellectual freedom after 2005. That showed that research on this area became more in-depth (See Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1
Columns & Topics on Library Rights in Professional Journals

Name of Journal	Column/Topic	Year	No. of Articles	No. of Authors
<i>Library</i>	Library Freedom	2000	1	1
	Library Freedom	2002	1	1
	“New Perspectives in New Century: A Dialogue on Knowledge Freedom”	2003	3	3
	“Forum on New Library Movement in the 21st Century”	2005	27	36
	Library rights, library freedom, rights of library users, intellectual freedom...	2006	20	23
		2007	8	12
		2008	11	16
		2009	15	20
		2010	11	13
	Total		97	125
<i>Library Development</i>	“Move to the Age of Rights”	2005	32	41
		2006	29	33
	Library rights, library freedom, rights of library users, intellectual freedom...	2007	2	3
		2008	8	9
		2009	2	4
		2010	7	8
	Total		80	98
<i>Document, Information & Knowledge</i>	“Disadvantaged Groups & Knowledge Equity”	2005	5	7
	Library rights, library freedom, rights of library users, intellectual freedom...	2007	5	5
		2008	2	3
		2009	1	1
	Total		13	16

Note: The chart was constructed by the author in accordance to the annual index of journals *Library*, *Library Development* and *Document, Information & Knowledge*.

Figure 1. Number of Articles on Library Rights in Professional Journals



Library is the earliest journal that focused on and advocated for library rights in Mainland China, by publishing two papers about library freedom in 2000 (Li, 2000a) and 2002 (Li, 2002). It also published two columns: “New Perspectives in New Century: A Dialogue on Knowledge Freedom” (2003) and “Forum on New Library Movement in the 21st Century” (2005-2006), in total sixty-two authors published fifty articles on library rights in these two columns. Major topics include intellectual freedom, information freedom, library freedom, library spirit and library rights (See Table 1).

Library Development is another journal which published many columns and articles on library rights. From 2005 to 2006, the journal included the column: “Move to the Age of Rights”, and a total of seventy-four authors published sixty-one articles on library rights on this column, articles’ topics ranged from library rights, library freedom, rights of library users, intellectual freedom, information rights, laws and policy of library rights (Jiang & Bi, 2004). After this column was published, about nineteen articles on library rights were published in this journal from 2007 to 2010. They discussed the status of research, knowledge freedom, the relationship between library rights and other subjects, such as library values, government responsibility, and library cards, library freedom, and information equity (See Table 1).

Document, Information & Knowledge is another important journal. In the 1st issue of 2005, a column entitled “Disadvantaged Groups &

Knowledge Equity” was published. Seven authors published five articles in this column. Their topics are about knowledge aid to vulnerable groups, information freedom, public library spirit, libraries being open to the public and library equity (See Table 1).

Among the scholars who conducted research on library rights in Mainland China, five scholars, including Cheng Huanwen (程焕文), Cheng Yanan (程亚男), Fan Bingsi (范并思), Jiang Yongfu (蒋永福) and Li Guoxin (李国新)³ have published the most on library rights. The following is a list of the publications and an analysis of the contents:

✧ Cheng Huanwen has published three books, one textbook, fifteen journal articles, and 131 blog articles, and completed one research project funded by the National Social Science Foundation (“A Study of Library Rights”) in this area. His three books are: (a) *A Study of Library Rights* is the first book titled with the phrase “Library Rights” in Mainland China. Basic theory, the library rights related policies, and case studies were included in this book (Cheng et al., 2011). (b) *Rights and Professional Ethics of Library* is a collection of nearly 124 policies the rights and professional ethics regarding library from more than thirty countries (Cheng & Zhang, 2007). (c) *Users Are Always Right* is a collection of sixty articles about the “Users Are Always Right” concept from the heated debates which took place on the web and in academic journals (Cheng & Wang, 2008). “*Information Resource Sharing*” is the first textbook which introduced contents related to library rights in Mainland China (Cheng & Pan, 2004). He also delivered and published more than twenty keynote speeches and journal articles on library rights. They focused on the theory of library rights, library rights and library spirit, library rights and professional ethic, library rights for users.

There is one more thing worth mentioning. Before and after EWLH took place, Cheng published three related articles on his weblog: (a) *The Basic Methods for Public Libraries to Solve the Problems about the Homeless People* provided some solutions to help homeless people keep clean when they used libraries (Cheng, 2008). (b) *An Answer to Netizen: Letting the Homeless People in Library to Get Heat Is a Basic Cultural*

3 Names are in alphabetic order.

Right indicated that he strongly supported what the director of HPL did during EWLH (Cheng, 2011a). (c) *The Case of the Homeless People Entering Hangzhou Public Library Is the Milestone of the Propagation of the Library Rights Ideology* might be the only one article which discussed the same subject as the current paper and supports its hypothesis. In this article, he pointed out: “The case of the homeless people entering HPL is a milestone for the propagation of the library rights ideology, and it is a symbol of the new starting point of the propagation of the library rights ideology in the second decade in the new century. If we ignore this milestone, we will lose this great opportunity to propagate the library rights ideology.” (Cheng, 2011b).

- ✧ Cheng Yanan has published twelve widely acclaimed journal articles on library rights, which focused on the rights of library users, library rights and library spirit, library rights and library service, and the right for citizens to read. From the statements provided below, we can see that her views are: (a) “The development of the rights of readers requires the elimination of all obstacles which restrict the implementation of and the goal of fairness in library services.” (Cheng, 2005). (b) “How to be aware of the rights of readers from the perspective of the legal system, how to maximize the cultural rights for citizens, protecting the rights of readers, and promoting intellectual freedom are issues which should never be neglected.” (Cheng, 2004)
- ✧ Fan Bingsi has published two books and thirteen articles on library rights and seven of his articles have been influential in academia. His book, *Fair Use of Library Resources* discussed library resources and service, core values and equity of library service, information equity, rights and equity of library service (Fan, 2010). His second book, *New Library Science in China: Progress and Its Problems* is a collection of his twenty-five articles from 1986 to 2005, these articles discussed the library professions’ consciousness of rights, public library spirit, the development of the systems for information equity and information guarantee (Fan, 2007). His articles focus on intellectual freedom, systems for information equity, public library spirit and library rights case studies in foreign countries. He considered library rights as the rights of citizen and library, and his definition of library rights has two

important aspects: “First, library rights in social meaning, they are the rights for citizen to accept library service. Second, professional rights of librarians, they are the rights for librarians to maintain the efficient operation of libraries. Library rights should be the unity of these two rights” (Fan, 2005)

- ✧ Jiang Yongfu has published the largest number of materials on library rights in Mainland China. In total he has published two books, two textbooks and twenty-nine articles. His first book, *The Research on Information Freedom and Its Limitation*, the first book on information freedom in Mainland China, focused on the freedom to access information, the freedom to cognize information, free information expression and the freedom to access information on the Internet (Jiang, 2007). His second book, *A Study of the Modern Public Library System* discusses the unique value of the public library and issues regarding public library administration in China (Jiang, 2010). He also published two textbooks, *An Introduction to Library Science* (Jiang, 2009) and *Foundations of Library Science* (Jiang, 2012), which introduces contents related to library rights. His articles concentrate on information freedom, freedom of knowledge, information rights and information equity. He stated: “Libraries are social institutions that ensure intellectual freedom, and the core value of the library profession is to ensure citizens’ rights of intellectual freedom.” (Jiang, 2003).
- ✧ Li Guoxin is another scholar who started researching library rights early. He has published one book and ten journal articles. In his book, *A Study of the Library Legal System in Japan*, he studied library freedom (Li, 2000b). His research focused on library freedom, intellectual freedom, laws and policies related to library rights, case studies on library rights in foreign countries. He considered library rights as the rights of professional librarians. After conducting his study on library rights in the U.S.A. and Japan, he concluded that library rights are the rights of library professionals, giving them the freedom to take social responsibility. (Li, 2005)

Based on the number of their publications and the number of times they have been read and cited, the publications of these five scholars can be considered the most important literature on library rights in Mainland China.

Not long after EWLH took place, in Mainland China, four related research articles were published in journals of Library and Information Science. In an article by Si Jiaojiao, she concluded that EWLH is a successful case of library public relations because of HPL's prompt and positive reactions to the debate in micro-blogs and their efforts of promoting the concepts of library service. (Si, 2011b). According to Yang Lizhi, EWLH was thought of as a good example of advocacy for libraries and the importance of advocacy work for libraries. (Yang, 2011). In another research article by Si Jiaojiao, taking into consideration the impact of micro-blogs on libraries, the necessity for and strategies for libraries to provide a micro-blog service were addressed. (Si, 2011a).

Compared with the above three articles, a research article written by Guo Xiaomin, shares the most similarities with the current paper. There are two similarities between these two articles: (a) both of them are case studies on the same case; (b) both of them focus on library rights. Guo raised two guiding questions in her article. Firstly, why did this issue attract so much attention? Provided that people's rights to free and equal access to library service had not yet been fully realized. Secondly, how could library professionals be inspired to think about this issue and then take action? It was limited in scope for the propagation of library rights and lacks an understanding of civil library rights (Guo, 2011).

The above articles have not discussed EWLH from the perspective of the propagation of the library rights ideology, as I conducted in the present paper. And I have taken the research further in this area by connecting this case and library rights, especially the propagation of the library rights ideology in Mainland China.

DISCUSSION

On January 18, 2011, He Lantai (贺 阑 泰), a netizen from Taiwan, posted a message on his micro-blog. He talked about how HPL welcomed homeless people to the library to read, which some users felt was unacceptable. While receiving complaints about that, Chu Shuqing, director of HPL said: "I have no right to refuse them to come in to the library to read, but you have the right to choose to leave." He Lantai praised the director

as a decent person. This blog was widely read and disseminated in a very short time on many web portals and bulletin board systems. Up to March 3, 2011, his micro-blog had been forwarded 16,797 times and received 4,478 comments and reviews (He, 2011). The issue was reprinted and reported extensively by mass media outlets such as China Central Television, Xinhuanet, People's Daily Online, Guangming Online, YAHOO! NEWS, SINA, and ifeng.com. At the time, reporters rushed to the HPL seeking interviews.

In summary, there were three different opinions on this case. First, most of the mass media and netizens praised HPL and the director, and called it “the Library in Heaven” (Wang, 2011). He was considered a hero (He, 2011). Second, some netizens thought it is unfair to other library users and worried they would be disturbed by homeless people (He, 2011). Third, some netizens and mass media outlets stated that this is what a public library is supposed to do and there is nothing to be surprised about (Chuan-Hua, 2011).

Regarding these opinions, it must be mentioned that both netizens and the mass media discussed social equity and civil rights in following ways:

- “Whether homeless people have time or not, whether they are willing to go to library to read or not, they should be entitled to the same rights as other citizens.” (Lu, 2011).
- “I support the director, please respect the homeless and respect people who earn a living by working hard with their hands. They have the same civil rights as everyone else including the right to read in a library and so on.” (Zhi, 2011).
- “No matter beggars or scavengers, both of them should have basic rights conferred by the law, there is no doubt that the rights to access to culture and knowledge and to read are included.” (Zhang, 2011)
- “For homeless people being allowed to go in the library and read is common sense. After it has become a popular topic in the news, this is a mockery of fairness; praising common sense diminishes the value of common sense.” (Chuan-Hua, 2011)
- “Hangzhou Public Library has been commended for opening to all people, it shows people’s aspiration and desire for equal rights, and shows that more and more people understand that all humans are equal

and consciousness of citizenship about human beings created equally and has been gradually disseminated. For the sake of equality, libraries should achieve the goal of equal rights for knowledge.” (Wang, 2011)

Among library professionals, this case also gave rise to an animated and lively discussion. Up to now, six articles have been published in three academic journals. Dozens of articles have been published in blogs and received hundreds of comments and reviews. In summary, there are three different opinions about this case: (1) Those who supported HPL, argued that reading in the library is a basic right for homeless people (Cheng, 2011a); (2) Those who disagreed with the HPL, felt it was unacceptable to let homeless people go in the library and read. One article titled, “*The Library’s Open to Beggars Is Just a Bluff*”, became a target during discussions (Tu-Mao, 2011); (3) Those who neither agreed nor disagreed thought it difficult in practice (Qi Ren Luan Tan , 2011).

According to the message on He Lantai’s micro-blog, the source of that story was originally from an article “The Civilian Tropism of a Luxurious Library”, written by Wan Runlong, a journalist at Wen Wai Po, and published on November 19, 2008. The article reports that HPL opened their new building to the public before National Day in 2008. Soon the library became a very popular place for people to go because it was open to all people, and there was no deposit and no handling charges and so on. Some homeless people went into the library to read. HPL only requested that they washed their hands before reading. Some users felt that this was unacceptable, they complained to Director Chu Shuqing that it was disrespectful to the other users. Chu answered, “If you don’t like to share the same space with homeless people, you may choose a different reading area of library. And I am sure you can find another comfortable place to read in our library.” (Wan, 2008). For some reason, at that time, the article drew very little attention. Why does the same story resonate so differently at two different times?

Another interesting point to mention, the director and librarians at HPL were very surprised at the heated discussions and debates it had caused and the interviews from the mass media. There are two reasons: First, HPL regarded welcoming homeless people as a responsibility it should undertake as a public library; second, the library did not think it would become a piece

of news, because they had welcomed homeless people since 2003. “Should it be news?” The librarians asked the reporters during interviews. (Yu, 2011)

If it had not been for the propagation of the library rights ideology, and the subsequent rediscovery of the case, then this story and its widespread media coverage would not have happened. This case is a manifestation of the public’s attention to library rights, and is also a result of the propagation of the library rights ideology. In order to have a better understanding of how the library rights ideology has been propagated, how it induced public awareness of library rights, and why this case occurred, it is necessary to be discussed from the four following perspectives:

I. The Planning and Promotion of Professional Organizations

Since 2002, as a professional organization, LSC has organized various kinds of activities to propagate the library rights ideology, such as follows:

(A) Establishing a special committee. After the Sixth Academic Committee of LSC was established in 2001, in consideration of the importance of issues such as library spirit, library law, intellectual property, librarians’ professional ethics and library rights for citizen, Cheng Huanwen proposed to establish the Library Laws and Intellectual Property Committee (LLIPC) at the meeting of chairman for the arrangement of professional research committees under the Academic Committee. This proposal was unanimously endorsed by the participating chairmen and vice chairmen, and Cheng was unanimously held up as the founding chairman of the committee by participants. LLIPC was formally established in 2002. The committee is charged with planning and organizing academic research and activities concerning library laws, intellectual property, library rights, and professional ethics for librarians and library spirit (Cheng, et al., 2011).

(B) Making and adopting professional policies, including *The Code of Ethics for Chinese Librarians* (trial implementation) (CECL) and *The Library Service Manifesto* (LSM). They are the symbols of great progress of development of ethics for librarians in China.

After the drafting, revision, interpretation, and a nationwide review of comments from May to September, 2002, LSC completed the final version of CECL on December, 2002. A book entitled *The Code of Ethics for Chinese Librarians* (trial implementation) was published by Beijing Library

Press on March, 2003, which included the full text and interpretation of CECL, and Chinese translation of the code of ethics which was published by the major library professional organizations in foreign countries. CECL was officially released during the National Library Service Week on May, 2003. There are eight items, 120 words in the main body of CECL. Its main content includes ideology of the profession, professional attitude, professional ability, professional discipline and professional relationships. This is the first Code of Ethics for library professionals in Mainland China, and a sign of the library profession entering the age of self-discipline (LSC, 2003).

Fan Bingsi proposed to draft LSM at the 2007 LSC Summit Meeting in Suzhou on December, 2006, which should show the core values of the library profession. Fang Bingsi and Ni Xiaojian (倪晓健) were selected to be the leaders of a project to draft “the Core Values of Library Profession in China and *The Library Service Manifesto*”. After the first draft of LSM was completed on June, 2007, it took sixteen months to request comments and complete discussions and revisions. The final version was finished on April, 2008. It was released at the 2008 LSC Annual Conference in Chongqing on October, 2008. Once it launched, it caused enormous repercussions both among library professionals and the public. Six famous journals in library science published its full text in a prominent position, and many mass media outlets released it. It includes seven sections, in total about 500 words. It fully reflected the thoughts about public welfare, equality and freedom, humanistic concerns, and sharing and collaboration. This was a major event with landmark significance, which could go down in the history of the development of libraries in China. This is the first professional commitment to library services for the public (LSC, 2008).

Table 2

Academic Activities on Library Rights held by LSC

Time	Activity Title	Topic
July 2002	Special Topic Forum 2002 LSC Annual Conference	Legislative Process of China's Library Laws: Dialogues with Government Officials
August 2003	Special Topic Forum 2003 LSC Annual Conference	Development of Ethics for Librarians & Library Legislation Environment
November 2004	The Second Youth Academic Forum, LSC	Library and Rights of Librarians
January 2005	2005 LSC Summit Forum	Library Rights
July 2005	The Third Forum on Library Laws & Intellectual Property 2005 LSC Annual Conference	Library Rights
July 2006	The Third Forum on Library Laws & Intellectual Property 2006 LSC Annual Conference 2007 LSC Summit Forum	Development of Library Legislation Environment in China: Protective Laws & Self- Regulation
August 2007	The Third Forum on Library Laws & Intellectual Property 2007 LSC Annual Conference	Development of Library Law & Harmonious Development of Libraries
July 2010	The Ninth Forum 2010 LSC Annual Conference	Safeguard Rights to Read & Enjoy the Happiness of reading

Note: The chart was constructed by the author in accordance to the website, Library Society of China.

(C) Organizing academic activities (See Table 2). From 2002 to 2010, LSC organized more than ten activities related to library rights. More than half of these activities were held by LLIPC. This is evidence that LLIPC has played a very important role in the propagation of the library rights ideology. After a topical analysis on these activities, three themes emerged: (a) Between 2002 and 2010, the topics of library legislation went through three stages: From 2002 to 2004, it was discussed from the government's perspective. From 2005 to 2007, it was discussed from the library's

perspective. And from 2008 to 2010, it was discussed from the user's perspective. (b) From 2002-2003, it turned from the legislative process and legislative environment, and to rights of librarians and library rights (2004-2005), and to library law (2006-2007), and to safeguard rights to read (2010). (c) The gradation of these activities showed a parabolic trend. From just a special topic forum at the LSC Annual Conference in 2002 and 2003, to a specialized conference in 2004, and to a summit meeting in 2005 when it peaked, then went back to a special topic forum at the LSC Annual Conference in 2006, 2007 and 2010. It proves that library right was one of the most popular research areas among library professionals in Mainland China in 2005.

By establishing a special committee, making and adopting professional policies and organizing academic activities, LSC has created a professional environment and a professional platform, and established a professional team to promote and propagate the library rights ideology in Mainland China. That not only forced library professionals, but also the mass media and the public to begin to pay more attention and understand the role of libraries and library rights.

II. Advocacy and Appeals from Professional Journals

As was mentioned in the "LITERATURE REVIEW", *Library*, *Library Development*, *Document*, *Information & Knowledge* are three prominent journals which have published many columns and articles on library rights. There are three things worth mentioning (See LITERATURE REVIEW & Table 1):

(a) *Library* is the journal which published the most articles on library rights in Mainland China between 2000 and 2010, it also published two celebrated columns in 2003 and 2005: "New Perspectives in New Century: A Dialogue on Knowledge Freedom" (2003) and "Forum on New Library Movement in the 21st Century" (2005-2006). The latter column was a very famous academic discussion rather than a movement, not only because of its large number of articles, but also its overwhelming influence on promoting the library spirit, propagating library rights ideology and the review of the practical problems in the library profession, and it had important historical value and practical significance in the history of libraries in Mainland China.

(b) By publishing the column “Move to the Age of Rights”, *Library Development* published the largest number and concentration of the articles in this area in the period (2005-2006) (Jiang, 2006). For this reason, the journal became the most famous base camp of research on this area and propagation of the library rights ideology.

(c) *Document, Information & Knowledge* is another prominent journal. Although the number of articles on library rights published in this journal was not large, the articles carried much weight, and made a great impact in the area among library professionals.

By publishing columns and articles on library rights which were read, cited and discussed, professional journals in library and information science have become powerhouses in advocating and appealing for the library rights ideology. That has strongly supported and promoted the research on library rights, and made more and more librarians and library staff understand library rights and become aware of their responsibilities to protect and guarantee the library rights of users.

III. Research and Propagation by Scholars

Among the scholars who conducted research on library rights and propagated the library rights ideology in Mainland China, the following five scholars are considered the most outstanding scholars based on the large number of their publications, keynote speeches, and their participation in all kinds of activities across the country and that the great impact they have brought to this field since 2000s. The following are some details showing how they have propagated library rights ideology:

Cheng Huanwen not only coined the phrase “图书馆权利” (library rights), and published numerous publications, but he has also completed the first project with the phrase library rights in the title in Mainland China funded by the National Social Science Foundation (“A Study of Library Rights”). The resulting study is called “A Study of Library Rights” (Cheng, et al., 2011). The book was placed in the “National Achievements Library of Philosophy and Social Sciences” in 2011 by the National Planning Office of Philosophy and Social Sciences. Furthermore, it received a very high evaluation from library professionals at home and abroad, and it was considered as the most important work on library rights in Mainland

China. *Information Resource Sharing* was published on July, 2004(Cheng & Pan, 2004), and won the second prize for “Outstanding Achievements in Philosophy and Social Science of Guangdong Province”. It is not only widely used by many universities and received unanimous positive evaluation from scholars, faculty members and students in and out of the university, but also caused a greater academic and social response. Up to now, it was cited 503 times⁴, twenty review papers have published in thirteen journals, and 123 related articles have published on forty-one weblogs, and the course of “Information Resource Sharing” was named “the National Fine Course” in 2007 (Cheng & Pan, 2006). In particular he capitalized on every chance to propagate the library rights ideology through giving lectures and interviews, chairing academic discussions, authoring columns in journals.

Another item worthy of mention is that he started a weblog “Cheng Huanwen Says”(程煥文如是说) in May, 2006, and it had 734,845 visitors and 656 articles had been published up to September 6, 2009. Among these articles, there were 131 articles related to library rights and library spirit, and three articles were related to EWLH. Based on its influence and popularity on the Internet, ideas regarding library rights, library spirit and professional ethics for librarians had been spread across the country.

Cheng Yanan was the former director of Nanshan Library, Shenzhen. As the only one practitioner (not an academic) among the five outstanding key scholars she has published 12 widely acclaimed journal articles in this area which focused on the rights of library users and the right for citizens to read. She also took advantage of every opportunity to promote library rights. Her work was important in helping propagate the library rights ideology.

Fan Bingsi is another active scholar who contributed to the propagation of the library rights ideology at various academic activities. One item worthy of mention is that between 2004 and 2008, he started the “Weblog of Lao-Huai”(老槐的博客) which had become very popular among library professionals at that time, and it had 491,410 visitors and 622 articles had been published on it until it was closed on October 24, 2008 (Lao-Huai, 2008). On his weblog he published sixty-six articles on library rights which captured much attention.

⁴ It is a retrieval result from CNKI (<http://www.cnki.net/>).

Jiang Yongfu has the largest number of publications on library rights in Mainland China. His studies concentrate on information freedom, freedom of knowledge, information rights and information equity. According to the number of publications he has published and the number of times they have been cited in the publications of others, his influence has been especially important.

Li Guoxin is another scholar who started researching library rights early. He has published one book and ten journal articles. His research focused on library freedom and the rights of librarians and library users. Not only did he propagate the library rights ideology through scholarly activities and lecturing, but he also offered related courses for graduate students. That was probably the first time library rights issues became the primary content of a graduate level course in Mainland China.

Because of the major impact of their research, professional, and academic activities of, they have not only become the most famous researchers and leading experts on library rights in Mainland China, but also have helped library professionals, the public, and the mass media understand library rights and be more aware of their library rights. Additionally, they continue to encourage and support library professionals and to protect and guarantee the library rights of users.

IV. Influence of the Mass Media

Since 2004, the mass media and netizens have turned their eyes to libraries and library service. This is due in part to library related events in Mainland China such as “The Event at National Library of China” (2004), “The Event at Xinyang Normal University Library” (2004), and “The Event at Suzhou Library” (2005). It shows that Chinese people have gradually come to be awakened to their library rights. While all of these events have evoked heated discussions about library service, library fees and charges, and the use of rare books both in the paper media and on the web, the mass media played an important role in making people more conscious of their rights.

(a) “The Event at National Library of China”. On October 14, 2004, Zhou Jiwu, vice editor in chief of Jinan University Press published an article in *Southern Weekend* describing details of two of his most unpleasant

experiences of borrowing books at the National Library of China. In his article, he quoted the *IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1949* to point out that the way the National Library of China charged and treated its users is “a brazen infringement on the public library ideology” (Zhou, 2004). It was promptly copied and forwarded by Internet users and the mass media all over the country, the article evoked a strong response from the public. People shared their indignation at the author’s experiences and supported his opinion. Some scholars in library science joined in discussions. In a weblog article, Fan Bingsi said, “A normal user quoted the *IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1949* to criticize fee-driven services at National Library of China, it is a signal of progress in concepts of library science and librarianship in our country and it shows the public has begun to understand and accept the spirit of the *IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1949*.” (Lao-Huai, 2004).

(b) “The Event at Xinyang Normal University Library”. Just two months after “The Event at National Library of China”, on December 11, 2004, the *Dahe Daily* reported that Xinyang Normal University Library charged students for seats in the reading room. After this news was released, it promptly drew the concern of the mass media and netizens. As a result of the intervention from the local government and professional associations, Xinyang Normal University Library immediately stopped charging and apologized to the public (He, 2004). During this event, students from Xinyang Normal University called the *Dahe Daily* to report this issue, and the mass media played a positive role in helping to minimize the detrimental impact. The case shows that the public has begun to be awakened to their rights to library service.

(c) “The Event at Suzhou Library”. On March 9, 2005, Qi Yongxiang, a professor from Peking University published an article on the website “Academic Criticism” describing how Suzhou Library refused him when he tried to copy or transcribe a rare book. He also criticized Suzhou Library by quoting *IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto* (Qi, 2005). “Academic Criticism” is a website which has quite a powerful hold in academic circles. This article was forwarded and reprinted by major mass media outlets, popular portal sites, and thousands of netizens in a very short time. It is worthwhile to note that, compared to the reaction to “The Event at National

Library of China”, reaction to “The Event at Suzhou Library” was quite different. Both Qi’s article and the mass media’s comments and reviews together with the netizens’ lively discussion, not only helped express their feelings of dissatisfaction, anger and censure, but also gave suggestions to solve those problems. This fully demonstrates that the public have already been conscious of their library rights and it acted rationally.

Obviously, in all of above mentioned events, especially in EWLH, the mass media, including traditional media and new media, played a very important role in propagating and promoting the library rights ideology. As popular and useful communications tools, new media, such as portal sites, blogs, micro-blogs, instant messaging tools (like QQ, Skype, Weixin), E-journals, and social networking sites, is worth a special mention. It is digital, often having characteristics of being manipulated, networkable, dense, compressible, rapid, and interactive. If there was no new media, EWLH would not take place.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the reason why EWLH has drawn people’s attention and caused much public debate eight years after it occurred, it is due to the great progress and positive effect of the propagation of the library rights ideology in Mainland China. Firstly, this case is a manifestation of the public’s attention to the library rights. The public in China have not only begun to pay attention to public libraries, but also they begin to care about their rights to access to library, especially begin to care about the rights of people with special needs, like homeless people. Mass media and many people reported or expressed their opinions related to library rights, cultural rights, rights to use library and rights of homeless people. Secondly, it is also because of the tireless hard work and promotion of professional organizations, the advocacy and appeals of professional journals, the propagation and research of scholars, and the reporting of the mass media that have made an increasing number of people aware of their library rights, and have begun to pay attention to protecting and safeguarding their own and others’ library rights.

In accordance with The *Constitution of the People’s Republic of China*,

everyone, regardless of sex and age or wealth, has basic cultural rights to equal and free access to the library. Whether they read in the library or they just enjoy the heat in the winter and air conditioning in the summer, the homeless people are also certainly entitled to those rights. It is quite a normal thing in many countries, though it still has not become an accepted notion in Mainland China. Therefore, there is still a long way to go until the library rights ideology is fully realized in China.

This study did not only enrich the research on library rights, but also propagated the library rights ideology, provided historical experience and a realistic reference for the development of librarianship in China and globally. Meanwhile it also shows that it is a long-term, arduous and historical mission, and there is an urgent duty for library professionals in China to advocate for making policies on library rights, to protect and preserve those rights, to make people more conscious of those rights, and to conduct more research on library rights theory and practice.

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圖書館權利思想在中國大陸的 傳播案例研究

The Propagation of the Library Rights Ideology
in Mainland China: A Case Study¹

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【摘要】

本文以“史上最溫暖圖書館”事件作為案例，從圖書館學專業組織的策劃與推動、專業期刊的倡導與呼籲、學者的研究與宣揚，以及大眾媒體的推波助瀾等多個角度，對近年來圖書館權利思想如何在中國傳播進行了研究。研究表明，該事件的發生及其後所引起的強烈反響與熱烈討論，正是圖書館權利思想在中國的傳播所取得的重大進步與正面效果，中國民眾的圖書館權利意識已經開始覺醒，但尚未普遍覺醒，中國圖書館界在圖書館權利的理論研究和具體實踐上仍然處在起步階段。因此，建立中國的圖書館權利政策體系、保障和維護民眾的圖書館權利、提高民眾的圖書館權利意識、加強圖書館權利理論與實踐研究，是中國圖書館界的一項長期而艱巨的歷史使命和刻不容緩的職業責任。本文採用了案例研究方法和歷史研究方法。

【關鍵字】

圖書館權利思想的傳播；“史上最溫暖圖書館”事件；圖書館權利案例研究；杭州圖書館

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