



Centennial anniversary of Tongji University, Shanghai, May 16-21, 2007

The centennial anniversary is a special event in the life of a university. The Ruhr University Bochum's partner university, Tongji University in Shanghai, was founded as a Medical School in Shanghai by the German doctor Erich Paulun in 1907. Tongji University Library invited me to the anniversary celebrations, and I gladly accepted the invitation.

I flew to Shanghai with a small delegation from the Ruhr University Bochum: with the vice rector, Professor T. Kiss, who travelled for the rector and with the head of the university's International Office, M. Sprung. At Shanghai's international airport Pudong students from Tongji University were waiting for us and accompanied Tongji University's guests arriving from all over the world to the waiting coaches. In the hotel a young colleague from the Tongji library, Xu Jing, was waiting for me; she brought me water and sushi to my hotel room, then I could rest a bit after the night on the plane.



After a short rest we drove to the Tongji University Library, where everything was prepared for my presentation about the teaching library. The young colleagues in the audience understood and / or spoke English very well, and after my presentation they asked questions which showed great interest.

During the following tour of the Tongji Library I noticed that the refurbishment and the extension of the library building which had been going on 5 years ago had been completed successfully. The library looks very well taken care of. In the large entrance hall several exhibitions were on display.

The space where 5 years ago numerous user PCs had been (from which we then had correctly concluded that this was a networked library), is now filled by a huge information desk in the shape of a circle and only a few user PCs for quick reference. The students now work in a large computer room.



I was very impressed to hear that Tongji Library has already implemented a meta search



engine to search its numerous databases simultaneously. The products currently on the market cannot process Chinese characters, therefore Tongji University Library had its meta search engine developed by Chinese IT experts. Chinese students are also used to entering a search term in a Google search bar, and they expect a search in the library to be equally easy. The Chinese colleagues also feel that students will search somewhere else, not in the library, if we librarians fail to make searching in our complex information systems easier. The young Chinese

information specialists were convinced that their expertise will still be needed with a meta search engine.

In the evening we had dinner together in a restaurant, and at the round dinner table we discussed our ideas for the future collaboration of our libraries. The director of Tongji University, Professor Shen Jenhua is very keen that the members of her staff travel to foreign countries and that they investigate in Bochum how the library has integrated information competence into the university's curriculum. Several Chinese colleagues expressed the desire to visit Bochum University Library in the framework of the partnership between Tongji University and the Ruhr University Bochum. Further, the Tongji Library owns German 18th century prints and would welcome help from the Bochum library in cataloguing them.



On the occasion of its anniversary Tongji University has organized several international conferences. I had the opportunity to participate in the “International Forum on Innovation for Sustainable Development” which took place on the new Jiading campus of Tongji University.



The old campus does not have adequate space for over 50 000 students. Today the Jiading campus is situated beyond the outskirts of Shanghai, but the city is growing at a rapid pace, and a very fast train connection between the city and the new campus is in the planning stage and will be completed in 2010. Several university departments have already moved to the new campus and more will follow.

Tongji University Library has a branch on the new campus.

On Sunday, May 20, 2007, I had the chance to participate in the official centennial celebration in the auditorium maximum of Tongji University. The campus was lavishly decorated with flowers, music from Beethoven and Vivaldi sounded out all over the campus.

I was impressed by a 20-year-old student and alumni and professors of Tongji University, who as representatives of the passed decades, presented their best wishes to the university. The 80-year-old representative was a vigorous emeritus who had come from the US for the occasion, and there were interviews presented on film with the 90-year-old and the emeritus over 90.



I visited the exhibition of Tongji University’s history with archival documents and objects. In the evening there was an open air festival in the sports arena on campus with Chinese pop, rock, disco music. Thousands of students with fluorescent batons turned the arena into a sea of light and color, and the light effects on the stage were equally stunning. The concert ended with an unforgettable firework display too magnificent to describe. (Fireworks are a Chinese invention.)

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