THE GENESIS OF YOUTH SERVICES IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN CHINA, 1912-1937

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

For thousands of years, libraries in China were treated as book repositories and remained closed to the public. It was not until the end of Imperial China and the establishment of a Republican China (1911) that the first public libraries became available. The Republic of China Era (1912-1949) witnessed various changes, including: an increased literacy level among the general public, the advent of modern school systems, the development of modern public libraries, the discovery of childhood, the growth of child welfare, and the flourishing of children’s literature. Youth services at public libraries in China emerged in this environment. Since 1909, pioneering librarians began to address the needs of children in professional settings by introducing Western youth service models and discussing how to establish, organize, and operate a children’s library in China. The first children’s reading rooms were founded in public libraries in the late 1910s, which predated the other elements of youth services librarianship. In response to the publication peak of children’s reading materials since the 1920s, librarians set standards for book selection and built library collections to meet children’s reading interests and needs. Moreover, children’s libraries gradually developed group methods to connect children with texts. In the 1930s, programs, such as reading guidance, reader’s club, storytelling, and exhibits became a viable part of youth services. The foundation of the Library Association of China in 1925, and the Resolution of 1933, stipulating that every library should have a children’s reading room, further advocated and formalized youth services. The above factors converged historically and contributed to the development and progress of youth services in public libraries in China from the founding of the Republic of China to the eve of the Sino-Japanese War (1912-1937).
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# Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES .......................................................................................................................... vi
LIST OF TABLES ............................................................................................................................. vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ............................................................................................................... viii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................... 1
  1.1 EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES ................................................................. 1
  1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS ....................................................................................................... 4
  1.3 METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES ..................................................................................... 6
  1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY ...................................................................................... 10
  1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS .................................................................................................... 11
  1.6 CHAPTER OVERVIEWS ...................................................................................................... 12

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND ........................................................................................................ 15
  2.1 REVOLUTION, CULTURAL MOVEMENT AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM ....................... 15
  2.2 PUBLIC LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT .................................................................................... 21
  2.3 CHINESE CHILDHOOD ..................................................................................................... 27
  2.4 CHINESE CHILDREN’S LITERATURE ............................................................................. 33

CHAPTER 3: YOUTH SERVICES IN THE REPUBLIC ERA ............................................................ 38
  3.1 LIBRARY POLICY .............................................................................................................. 38
  3.2 READING ROOMS AND FACILITIES ............................................................................... 49
  3.3 CHILDREN’S LITERATURE ............................................................................................... 69
  3.4 CHILDREN’S READING INTERESTS ............................................................................... 78
  3.5 LIBRARY COLLECTION .................................................................................................... 93
  3.6 YOUTH SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING ..................................................................... 102
  3.7 YOUTH SERVICES LIBRARIANS ..................................................................................... 120

CHAPTER 4: CHILDREN’S LIBRARIES IN THE REPUBLIC ERA: FOUR LIBRARIES ................. 135
  4.1 THE CAPITAL LIBRARY OF CHINA ................................................................................. 135
  4.2 THE TIANJIN CHILDREN’S LIBRARY ............................................................................. 141
  4.3 THE LIBRARY OF THE FIRST PRIMARY SCHOOL OF BEIJING NORMAL UNIVERSITY ........ 142
  4.4 THE SHANGHAI CHILDREN’S LIBRARY ....................................................................... 150
  4.5 THE DEVELOPMENTAL MODELS .................................................................................... 152

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION .......................................................................................................... 154
  5.1 RESEARCH FINDINGS ..................................................................................................... 154
  5.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH ....................................................................................... 168
  5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY ...................................................................................... 170
  5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH ................................................................. 173

REFERENCES: ............................................................................................................................... 177

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHILDREN’S READING INTERESTS AND READING HABITS .................................................................................................................. 193

APPENDIX B: COMPARISON OF CONDITIONS IN THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY .................................................................................. 195
List of Figures

Figure 3.1: An open 4-layer bookshelf blueprint.......................................................... 57
Figure 3.2: An open 7-layer bookshelf blueprint.......................................................... 58
Figure 3.3: An open bookcase blueprint ..................................................................... 58
Figure 3.4: The blueprint of a book display................................................................. 60
Figure 3.5: A display made from blackboard............................................................ 61
Figure 3.6: The floor plan of Wuxi Leikou Primary School Library......................... 63
Figure 3.7: Lu’s floor plan of a children’s reading room ......................................... 64
Figure 3.8: Wang’s floor plan of a single children’s reading room......................... 65
Figure 3.9: The First Municipal Library of Beiping, Beiping: children’s reading room circulation desk, 1936 .......................................................... 67
Figure 3.10: The First Municipal Library of Beiping, Beiping: children’s reading room, 1936 .......................................................... 67
Figure 3.11: The inside page of Qi Meng Hua Ba, 1902............................................. 71
Figure 3.12: The cover of the first issue of Er Tong Jiao Yu Hua, 1908...................... 72
Figure 3.13: Popularity of magazines among students .............................................. 82
Figure 3.14: Volumes of books read in fourteen weeks ............................................. 88
Figure 3.15: Summer camp children read at dawn, 1936 ........................................ 115
Figure 4.1: The Library of the FPSBNU’s weekly reading statistics ......................... 146
Figure 4.2: The middle-graders with over 40 visits in five weeks (1936 Fall)............ 147
Figure 4.3: Statistics of checked-out books by class (1936 Spring)......................... 148
List of Tables

Table 3.1: Standards on children’s library reading tables and chairs ..................... 55
Table 3.2: Statistics of children’s books published from 1909 to 1933 ..................... 77
Table 3.3: Profile of the survey respondents .......................................................... 79
Table 3.4: Children’s book reading interests as related to age and gender ............ 80
Table 3.5: Central University Laboratory School students’ reading interests ........ 86
Table 3.6: List of Anhui Provincial Library’s children’s collection classes .......... 102
Table 4.1: Library visitors, 1914 to 1918 ................................................................. 138
Table 4.2: Statistics on children's collection ............................................................. 144
Table 4.3: The Library of the FPSBNU’s weekly reading statistics ..................... 146
Table 4.4: Statistics of checked-out books by class (1936 Spring) ....................... 148
# List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALA</td>
<td>American Library Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNAAE</td>
<td>Chinese National Association for the Advancement of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPSBNU</td>
<td>First Primary School of Beijing Normal University</td>
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<td>LAC</td>
<td>Library Association of China</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSC</td>
<td>Library Society of China</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>NLC</td>
<td>National Library of China</td>
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<td>NYSL</td>
<td>New York State Library</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction

“It is not a disgrace for a nation to lack a navy or an army! It is only a disgrace for a nation to lack public libraries, museums, and art galleries. Our people must get rid of this kind of disgrace.”
– HU Shi, 1915.

China has a civilized history of more than five thousand years, and the existence of ancient libraries can be dated back as early as to the sixth century B.C. However, for thousand of years, the old style libraries in China were treated mainly as book repositories and were closed to the public. It was not until the end of Imperial China and the establishment of a Republican China that public libraries became available. Little has been written on the beginning of the modern public libraries in China and less still on the genesis of youth services in China. My dissertation aims to trace the development of youth services in public libraries in China from the founding of the Republic of China to the eve of the Sino-Japanese War (1912-1937).

1.1 Early Development of Youth Services

The foundation of the Republic of China marked the end of over two thousand years of Imperial China and the beginning of a promising modern China. The Republic of China Era (1912-1949) witnessed the discovery of childhood, the flourishing of literature in vernacular language, the blooming of modern schools as well as the promotion of social education. Youth services in public libraries in China developed in this context.

At the second annual conference of the Library Association of China (LAC) in
1933, a resolution was passed, stipulating that every city and county should build independent children’s libraries and that every library should have children’s reading rooms (LAC 1933, 54-55). The LAC based its resolution on the principle that children should be provided with entertaining books to read in their spare time, and children’s libraries were needed to provide these books and educate children (LAC 1933, 54). A few decades earlier, children were not so welcome in China’s public libraries. For example, the Hunan Provincial Library, one of the first public libraries, restricted access to readers who were at least 12 years of age (Hunan 1982, 152-58). By allowing access and making room for young readers, public children’s libraries in China evolved tremendously in less than three decades.

In 1909, CAI Wensen, a productive educator and scholar in the Republic Era, wrote the essay, “Ways to Establish Children’s Libraries” in the Educational Review. Cai’s was the first work to discuss, in Chinese, the subject of children’s libraries in China. Cai argued that Western countries had children’s libraries in every city, and it was necessary for China to build children’s libraries too (Cai 1909, 49-50). He introduced some children’s libraries in Japan and discussed how to establish, organize and operate a children’s library (Cai 1909, 49-50). Though there were no children’s libraries at that time in China, the paper prepared public opinion for their arrival.

In 1914, the first children’s reading room was founded in the Capital Popular Library shortly after the library opened (Zheng 1990, 9-12). The library’s collection of children’s books included textbooks, fairy tales, picture books, novels as well as magazines; and the titles of these children’s books were written and displayed in the hallways (Zhuang 1914, 18-20). According to ZHUANG Yu, a prominent educator of the
era’s diary, on average, there were around thirty readers visiting the library every day, most of whom were children (Zhuang 1914, 18-20). Later on, Jilin, Zhejiang, Jiangxi and other provinces also opened children’s reading rooms in the public libraries. In 1917, the first independent children’s library was established in Tianjin by the Tianjin Social Education Bureau (Zheng 1990, 9-12). The library provided free services to children from 8 years old to 12 years old regardless of gender (Lin 1982, 382-84). In addition to children’s literature books, the library had a collection of various toys that the administrators would display during open hours (Lin 1982, 382-84). There were also storytelling, exhibits and other kinds of programs that took place in the library periodically (Lin 1982, 382-84). In 1931, the Hangzhou Municipal Children’s Library was established with the goal of connecting children with reading – it stipulated in its library regulations that the aim of the library was to “increase reading interest, enhance reading opportunity, guide to read, introduce reading materials and provide reference materials” (Hangzhou 1931, 23). By 1934, there were 93 independent children’s libraries in China (Chiu 1935, 16). In 1936, according to surveys conducted by the Zhejiang Public Library, of all the 34 provincial libraries then, 19 mentioned specifically that they had at least one separate children’s reading room, with a capacity that varied from 12 to 120 seats (Yan 1983, 63-100). The quantity of juvenile materials varied from 115 titles and 350 volumes in the Jilin Public Library to 571 titles and 2,923 volumes in the Anhui Public Library (Yan 1983, 63-100).

Despite the scattered evidence of the existence of library services to youth in modern public libraries, much work needs to be done to investigate the genesis of youth services in China.
1.2 Research Questions

The work on the history of the modern Chinese libraries is largely concerned with the development of library services in public libraries in China since 1949. Little has been written on the beginning of the modern public libraries in China and less still on the genesis of youth services in China. A minimal amount of specific research exists that traces the development of youth services librarianship in modern public libraries in China. Of the available scholarship, most focuses on the modern public library movement with youth services librarianship given only minimal consideration. My research will be the first endeavor to systematically study the genesis of children’s libraries and youth services in China.

This work tries to answer the following questions:

1) What were specific elements and contributions in the development of youth services in China from 1912-1937?

In her study of the development of youth services in American public libraries between the years 1875 and 1906, Fannette Thomas argued that the genesis of youth services reflected the influence of a multiplicity of factors: “1 the advent of the separate juvenile book collection; 2 the appearance of the separate children’s room; 3 the contributions of pioneer librarians; 4 the development of techniques of reader’s services; 5 the mechanism for interagency cooperation” (Thomas 1982). This framework serves as a useful starting point for examining the development of children’s libraries in China. Besides the above elements, did other factors contribute to the progress of youth services in China? What were specific elements and contributions in the development of youth services in China from 1912-1937?
2) In what ways did American and other international ideas about librarianship impact this development?

It is generally acknowledged that Japanese and Western librarianship (especially American librarianship) greatly impacted the development of the modern library in China. Research on the impact of Japanese and Western librarianship on Chinese librarianship in modern times is widely available. What is unknown, however, is Japanese and Western librarianship’s influence on Chinese youth librarianship. To what degree does the development of youth services librarianship in modern Chinese public libraries reflect Japanese and Western influences? While American librarianship had a considerable and powerful influence on modern Chinese librarianship by providing a model, helping to train librarians and introducing library science and technology, an initial examination of primary resources revealed that Japanese librarianship’s influences ostensibly preceded those of American librarianship. This research reveals the impacts of American, Japanese and other international youth librarianship on the development of youth services in China.

3) To what extent did the Republic Era's investment in children and similar social and cultural changes impact library services to youth?

In the U.S., large social and cultural forces influenced the development of public library services to children from 1876 to 1900 (McDowell 2007). What’s the situation in China? The foundation of the Republic of China marked the end of over two thousand years of Imperial China and the beginning of a promising modern China. The Republic Era (1912-1949) witnessed the discovery of childhood, the flourishing of literature in vernacular language, the blooming of modern schools as well as the promotion of social
education. But there is a whole history that we don’t know. We don’t know the relationship between the Republic Era’s investment in children and the development of children’s libraries in China; we don’t know the connection between the Republic Era’s social and cultural progress and its impacts on library services to youth. To what extent did the investment in social and cultural changes influence the library services to youth in China? What did the early development of youth services librarianship in China imply about the place of children—socially and culturally—in China?

1.3 Methodology and Sources

The principal approach to this study involves a historical research method. I utilized both primary and secondary materials written in English and Chinese. In particular, I examined published materials, including early periodicals, historical documents, and reports. In addition, I examined the archives of the American Library Association to provide materials relevant to the study. The visits to four libraries in China produced internal materials not published. I also conducted additional document analysis and archival work to investigate the history of youth services in Chinese public libraries from 1912 to 1937.

1.3.1 Published Sources

The three major library journals in the Republic Era—Zhonghua Tu Shu Guan Xie Hui Hui Bao (Bulletin of the Library Association of China) (1925-1948), Tu Shu Guan Xue Ji Kan (Library Science Quarterly) (1926-1937), and Wenhua Tu Shu Guan Xue
Zhuan Ke Xue Xiao Ji Kan (Boone Library School Quarterly) (1927-1937) serve as the starting point for my research.

The Bulletin of the Library Association of China was a bimonthly journal published by the Library Association of China from June 1925 to May 1948. The Bulletin existed for 24 years and produced 21 volumes and 102 issues. Its content included scholarly writing on topics ranging from library laws and library surveys to library news, book reviews and members information. It is the “encyclopedia” of Chinese libraries and librarianship during the Republic Era. With its rich information on national library surveys, scholarship on library science, library news and publication news, it is regarded as the must-have historical resource for researchers in Chinese library science.

Library Science Quarterly was a research oriented journal also published by the Library Association of China from March 1926 to June 1937 (volumes 1-11). It was “devoted to the study and promotion of theory and practice of library work” (Liu 1935). By introducing the western library science and assimilating the indigenous Chinese culture, this journal documented the development of modern library and library science in China.

The Boone Library School Quarterly was a bilingual (Chinese section and English section) journal published by the Boone Library School from 1929 to 1937 (volumes 1-9). As a periodical supported and published by a library school, the Boone Library School Quarterly focused on the theoretical discussion of library science, research of domestic and international library and librarianship development, as well as practical issues of cataloging, reference and circulation.

By examining the contents of these three major library journals from the Republic
Era, an understanding of the general development of library services in China and youth services in specific was achieved. However, these three major periodicals were published after 1925, and there was no library journal before that time. To account for the historical gap, I examined the *Jiao Yu Za Zhi (Educational Review)* as a supplement. The *Educational Review* was the most prominent journal on education in the Republic Era. Published by the Commercial Press from 1909 to 1948, it had a large collection of articles on library science. The first Chinese scholarly paper on the children’s library was also published in this periodical in 1909.

Two compilation works in Chinese provided access to historical documents and materials not easily found elsewhere. *Zhongguo Gu Dai Cang Shu Yu Jin Dai Tu Shu Guan Shi Liao (The Historical Resources of Ancient Collection and the Modern Library of China)* collected and reprinted 255 historical documents, such as imperial edicts, government memorandum, and statistics on Chinese library development from around 500 B.C. to 1919. *Min Guo Shi Qi Tu Shu Guan Xue Bao Kan Zi Liao Fen Lei Hui Bian: Er Tong Tu Shu Guan Juan (The Republic of China Era Library Science Periodical Materials Compilations: Children’s Library)* collected and reprinted 356 documents and periodicals on Chinese children’s library development from 1909 to 1949. These two sources provided valuable information on the modern development of Chinese libraries and children’s libraries, in particular.

1.3.2 Archival Sources

The archive of the American Library Association provided resources for
understanding American influences on the development of Chinese librarianship. The China Projects File (2 boxes) includes materials on the Books for China Project (1938-1940), war damage to Chinese libraries and related topics. The Subject File has one box of correspondence and information on grants for Books for the Kids of China project. The Library Vertical Files has one box on China-Libraries and A. E. Bostwick, which includes materials on Chinese libraries and Dr. Bostwick’s visit to China, 1923-1953.

The author also attempted to retrieve archives of the Library Association of China (1925-1949). The Library Association of the Republic of China (Taiwan) founded in 1953 and the new Library Society of China founded in 1979 are the two descendants of the Library Association of China. However, representatives of both organizations confirmed to the author that they didn’t hold any official archives of the Library Association of China.

1.3.3 Library Visits

To understand the development of the children’s reading room at public libraries, independent children’s libraries as well as youth services provided during the early twentieth century, the author visited four Chinese public libraries. The four libraries include: 1) The National Library of China: the predecessor of which is the Capital Library founded in 1909, since then, the National Library has functioned as the role model for other public libraries; 2) The Hubei Provincial Library: the Hubei Provincial Library was established in 1904 and is one of the first public libraries in China; 3) The Capital Library of China: one of the predecessors of the Capital Library of China is the Capital Popular Library, where one of the first children’s reading rooms in China was
founded in 1914; 4) The Shanghai Children’s Library: established in 1941, the Shanghai Children’s Library was one of the largest children’s libraries in the Republic Era. All of the four libraries are still in existence today.

The visit to the National Library of China yielded the manuscript of WANG Bainian’s *Zhongguo Er Tong Tu Shu Guan Shi Ye Fa Da Shi* (*History of Children’s Library in China*), the single unpublished work written during the Republic Era on the history of Chinese children’s libraries. Visits to the Hubei Province Library and Capital Library of China garnered internal documents related to each library’s historical development. The Shanghai Children’s Library was not particularly helpful for this project. Although it housed the largest collection of children’s literature published in the Republic Era, the request to examine its resources was denied.

### 1.4 Significance of the Study

Scholarship on the history of the modern Chinese libraries is largely concerned with the development of youth services in public libraries in China since 1949. There is a noticeable lack of literature that addresses the beginning of the modern public libraries in China or the genesis of youth services in China. A minimal amount of specific research exists that traces the development of youth services librarianship in modern public libraries in China. This doctoral dissertation is the first work on the genesis of children’s libraries in China and endeavors to provide a compelling discovery and analysis of the growth and the development of youth services in China from 1912 to 1937.

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1Although the founding of the Shanghai Children’s Library in 1941 falls outside the date range from 1912 to 1937, the library contained a large collection of Chinese children’s literature published in the 1920s and 1930s. Therefore, the author included the library among her library visits.
This research chronicles the development of children’s libraries in China from 1912-1937, develops a model of internal and external factors that contributed to the progress of youth services in China, and provides a theoretical framework for further study on the history of Chinese youth services. By situating the genesis of youth services in public libraries within the context of general, social, cultural, and educational changes in the Republic Era, this research addresses how the growth of children’s libraries was affected by educational, social, and cultural conditions in the Republic Era and anticipates the development of youth services under the current conditions in China. Through analyzing the impact of American librarianship on the development of youth services librarianship in China, this research also contributes to the study of the relationship between American librarianship and Chinese librarianship as well as to the history of youth services librarianship in the United States.

1.5 Definition of Terms

Library: The term library refers to the modern library that provides collections to patrons for reference or borrowing purposes. The term “Tu Shu Guan” (library) was not introduced to China until the beginning of the twentieth century. It is different from the term “Cang Shu Lou” (book storing house), which refers to the old libraries that emphasized the preservation of literary treasure instead of information distribution.

Public library: Public libraries are a system of libraries that are supported by the government and provide services to the general public. Public libraries may include national libraries, provincial libraries, city libraries, county libraries and district libraries, etc. A public library is not necessarily a free public library.
Children: In Chinese, the term children (er tong/shao nian er tong/shao er) is often used as an inclusive term for children and young adults, ages 0 to 18. In my dissertation, I’m going to follow this practice and propose to use the term children to loosely refer to children and young adults, ages 0 to 18.

Children’s library: Children’s library refers to both independent libraries for children and children’s departments in public libraries. From the start, the coexistence of children’s departments in public libraries and independent libraries for children has been a unique character of library services to youth in China.

Youth services: Youth services refers to library services to children and young adults in public library settings. In this dissertation, youth services, library services to youth, and library services to children will be used interchangeably.

The Republic Era: The Republic of China Era (Min guo shi qi) is the period from 1912 to 1949. I use the shortened form, “the Republic Era” to refer to the Republic of China Era.

1.6 Chapter Overviews

Chapter 1 introduced the early development of youth services in China during the Republic Era. It raised three research questions related to its development, discussed the methodology and sources employed in the study, and made clarifications on some terms used in the study. The following chapters investigate the process, genesis, and development of youth services in public libraries in China.

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2Some scholars and librarians in the Republic Era used the term “children’s library” to broadly refer to libraries that provided youth services in both public and school settings. It is inevitable for the author to include some examples of school libraries in the dissertation. However, the major focus remains on the youth services in public library settings.
Chapter 2 reviews the historical background of the genesis of Chinese children’s libraries. It considers the cultural movement and modern educational reform, the development of modern public libraries, the discovery of children and growth of child welfare, and the flourishing of children’s literature in the Republic Era. This chapter analyzes such factors as social, cultural, and educational background of the genesis of Chinese youth services librarianship.

Chapter 3 considers how the advent and progress of a multiplicity of factors shaped the genesis of children’s libraries in China from 1912 to 1937. It includes the advocacy of the library association and the support of favorable library policy, the provision of separate children’s rooms, the attention to children’s reading and children’s literature, the advent of separate children’s literature collections, the progress of youth services programs and the contributions of pioneer librarians. These elements are analyzed as major factors that contributed to the development of youth services in public libraries in the Republic Era.

Chapter 4 analyzes four representative children’s libraries to illustrate the development of the children’s reading room at public libraries and school libraries, independent children’s libraries, as well as youth services that were provided during the early twentieth century.

Chapter 5 presents the research findings by chronicling the development of children’s libraries in China from 1912-1937 and identifying the major elements, external and internal factors that contributed and influenced this development. This chapter also summarizes the contributions as well as the limitations of this study. The dissertation is
concluded with suggestions for future research with the intention of encouraging further studies on the history of Chinese youth services librarianship.
Chapter 2: Background

The Chinese youth services librarianship emerged in an environment of expansion amid modern schools, extending the services of modern public libraries, a fuller understanding of childhood and the advent of indigenous children’s literature. This chapter canvasses scholarship on the Republic Era’s cultural and educational reform, the historical progress of Chinese public libraries and librarianship, the development of modern Chinese children’s literature, and the history of Chinese childhood. It analyzes these factors as social, cultural, and educational backgrounds of the genesis of Chinese youth services librarianship.

2.1 Revolution, Cultural Movement and Educational Reform

China experienced never-ending revolutions and reforms during the first half of the twentieth century. Indeed, “if there is one word to describe China since 1911, it is revolution” (Schurmann and Schell 1967, xiii). The Revolution of 1911 overthrew the Qing Dynasty, China’s last imperial dynasty, and established the Republic of China in 1912. During the initial years of the Republic Era, regional warlords fought for government, and the Republic of China was ruled by a series of military regimes. It was not until 1927 that the Nationalist Government at Nanking unified the country. During the years 1928 to 1937, China’s economy, culture and education progressed under the Nanking Government. On account of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and the Civil War (1945-1949), progress in those areas was thwarted.

Under the political upheavals, years of struggle with foreign domination and
traditional culture culminated in the May Fourth Movement. On May 4, 1919, students in Beijing rallied against the pro-Japanese government’s peace negotiation, which ceded the province of Shandong to Japan. This demonstration led to more struggles and rallies and lasted until the final surrender of the government (Hu 1967, 52-62). The May Fourth Movement was the convergence of a revolution in culture and anti-foreign nationalism (Schurmann and Schell 1967, 50). It simulated a cultural movement directed at the rejection of Confucian tradition and the absorption of Western culture. The May Fourth period (1915-1921) takes its name from the movement. It is a high point of China’s culture revolution and a creative period for many prestigious modern writers that created great literary works.

A significant part of the May Fourth Movement involves literature movement. In 1917, avant-garde intellectuals like HU Shi launched a campaign to reject classical language and publish magazines, newspapers and books in vernacular language. This effort is known as the Chinese Literary Renaissance or the New Culture Movement (Schurmann and Schell 1967, 51). By 1920, vernacular language assumed the name of “National Language of China” (Hu 1967, 52-62). By 1922, the Ministry of Education required that all of the textbooks for first and second graders in primary schools be rewritten in the “national language” (Hu 1967, 52-62). Within a few years, the living language of the people replaced the classical language, and the literary revolution brought “a new language, a new literature, a new outlook on life and society, and a new scholarship” (Hu 1967, 52-62).

Educational reform is a key aspect associated with the cultural movement. Prior to
the advent of the modern education system in China, the Sishu (old-style private school) and civil service examination formed the main parts of the old Chinese educational system. When children of 7 or 8 years of age entered Sishu, Confucian classics – *San Zi Jing* (*Three Character Classic*), *Qian Zi Wen* (*Thousand Character Classic*) and *Bai Jia Xing* (*Hundred Family Surnames*) – written in classical Chinese were the first texts to be memorized by students. These primers served as textbooks for formative education as well as moral education. After completing primers, children entered the study of the Four Books and the Five Classics[^3] and other classic literature intended to prepare students for imperial examination. The imperial examination was a kind of civil service examination to select officers for the imperial. The examination took the form of essay writing, and students were expected to write literary compositions within a set amount of time. To a large extent, the rigid requirements for the compositions and examination tested students’ knowledge of the Four Books and Five Classics, which shaped the curricula of the old education system and the students’ education as a result. It was difficult to trace any study of science in the old education system’s curricula, which would help to “develop the thinking faculties, such as reason or invention” (Monroe 1911, 635). This education system was limited by China’s insularity until its people came into contact with other countries and cultures. However, after the Treaty of Nanking opened five Chinese ports to foreigners in 1842, which marked the beginning of a “century of humiliation,” the traditional education system could no longer support modern China’s need for science, democracy, and power.

[^3]: The Four Books and Five Classics are Confucian Classics in China. The Four Books include the following: *Da Xue* (*Great Learning*), *Zhong Yong* (*Doctrine of the Mean*), *Lun Yu* (*Analects*), and *Meng Zi* (*Mencius*). The Five Classics include *Shi Jing* (*Classic of Poetry*), *Shang Shu* (*Book of Documents*), *Li Ji* (*Book of Rites*), *Yi Jing* (*I Ching*), and *Chun Qiu* (*Spring and Autumn Annals*).
In an effort to maintain order, the Qing government attempted to implement a series of reforms since the late nineteenth century. In 1898, the Emperor issued an edict that read, “Our scholars are now without solid and practical education; our artisans are without scientific instructors; when compared with other countries we soon see how weak we are. …Changes must be made to accord with the necessities of the times…we must establish elementary and high schools, college and universities, in accordance with those of foreign countries” (Monroe 1911, 635). This edict and a series of edicts that followed, which were issued by the Emperor and the Empress, resulted in the implementation of educational reforms across the country. In 1903, a detailed plan for the first modern educational system in China was sanctioned by the imperial government and served as a guideline for educational reforms throughout the country (Kuo 1915, 78). According to the plan, the modern national educational system would comprise a hierarchy of kindergarten, lower primary school, higher primary school, middle school, higher school, university, and school of research (Kuo 1915, 79). Additionally, it would include normal school, industrial school, and special schools (Kuo 1915, 79).

In 1905, the court abolished the traditional civil service examination, which finalized the shift from traditional education to modern education in China (Kuo 1915, 86). In the same year, the Ministry of Education was formed to further the cause of the Qing government’s educational reform. In the following years, modern schools of different types were established and more diverse courses, such as Chinese classics, mathematics, history and geography, natural science, physical education were offered in these schools (Kuo 1915, chap. 5). Until the fall of the Qing government, the number of modern schools increased from 4,222 in 1905 to 52,343 in 1910; moreover, the number
of students in those schools increased from 1,274 in 1903 to 1,625,534 in 1910 (Kuo 1915, 108). The Qing government’s educational reforms promoted modern education as an asset available to the general public. This concept caused a series of institutional changes, and laid the foundation for modern educational reform in the Republic Era.

Between the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912 and the unification of the nation in 1927 by Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist Government at Nanking, a large portion of China was in fragmentary control of local political parties and warlords. China was in constant turmoil as the result of the conflicts between these parties. Meanwhile, additional locations in China became open to foreign nations. Consequently, the Republic China needed to design reforms for its social, political, and educational systems in order to maintain stability from within and secure safety from without its borders.

Modern educational reform launched in the Republic Era was aimed to promote the democratization, scientific, internationalization, and localization of education (Xie 2014, 115-19). Many prominent educators of the time believed that “China’s illiterate millions must be educated, if democracy is to prove a blessing to herself and to mankind” (Doo 1935, 129). In 1912, the Ministry of Education reorganized and subdivided into three bureaus: the General Education Bureau, the Professional Education Bureau, and the Social Education Bureau (Tu 1996, 107). Republican China’s educational reform policies emphasized social education and aimed at cultivating democracy and disseminating knowledge through social education institutions, including libraries, museums, and popular education centers. The central Social Education Bureau and local authorities were responsible for advancing the development of these social-educational institutions.
In addition to the development of a more coherent school system with primary, secondary, middle schools, and universities, the Republic’s central, provincial, and local governments actively promoted popular (mass) education and institutions for its society (Chiu 1935, 1-18). The modern educational reform of the Republic Era brought literacy to a greater part of the population, stimulated the general public’s demand for modern libraries, and facilitated the establishment of modern public libraries.

Modern educational reforms included the transformation of traditional education methods. Old (“dead”) teaching methods were abandoned, and modern educators and schools sought new (“live”) teaching methods. John Dewey’s two-year visit to China (1919–1921) introduced his pragmatic educational philosophies to Chinese educators and teachers, resulting in the transformation of Chinese school education. Child-initiative teaching methods were adopted by most primary and middle schools, child-centered curriculum was developed, and new textbooks written in vernacular language were published (Wang 1942; Hoyt 2006; Xie 2014). Such new education concepts emphasized students’ initiative, self-reliance, and independence. It encouraged them to use books to assist with self-learning (Hu 1926; Wang 1942; Xie 2014). Therefore, children’s libraries, complete with a variety of reading materials, emerged as an indispensable part of the new education system. School libraries of various sizes were established to assist with school education. Some school libraries, such as the Library of the First Primary School of Beijing Normal University, and the Library of the Laboratory School of National Central University, were prominent and served as role models for other school libraries. However, the inadequate budgets of most schools limited the development of school
libraries; thus, public children’s libraries with expansive and rich collections became the ideal place for children’s voluntary reading and self-learning practices.

2.2 Public Library Development

In reviewing the historical development of libraries in China, four distinct periods can be identified: the ancient period before 1840, the transitional period from Imperial China to Republican China (1840-1911), the Republic of China period (1912-1948), and the People’s Republic of China period (1949-) (Proett 1974). YAN Wenyu, the university librarian of Peking University Library in the 1930s, regarded the years from 1905 to 1911 to be the genesis of the modern public libraries in China, and the years from 1912 to 1937 as the growth era of library development (Yan 1983). CHIU Kaiming, librarian of the Chinese-Japanese library of Harvard University, used the same timeline. But he further divided the Chinese modern library movement into three periods: 1905-1916 was the beginning of modern public libraries; 1917-1926 was the second period of the development of public libraries; 1927-1935 was the development of public libraries under the Nanking government (Chiu 1935, 1-18). This way of using social and political divisions to mark the library development period was widely adopted by scholars domestic and abroad.

2.2.1 Ancient Period (Before 1840)

There were four different kinds of libraries in imperial China prior to the

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*The Opium War of 1840 marked the beginning of the Modern Period of China.*
establishment of modern public libraries: imperial libraries, imperial academy or state college libraries, private family libraries, and monastery libraries. The imperial libraries in each dynasty were established primarily to preserve the nation’s literature and archives; and they were intended exclusively for the royal family, high-ranking officials and scholars (Kuo 1926; Chiu 1935). The imperial academy and state college libraries in different provinces were open to scholars and students only (Kuo 1926; Chiu 1935). Private libraries also had a long history in China; they were built to meet the specific needs of private book collections and were seldom open to the public (Kuo 1926; Chiu 1935). Besides those libraries, monastery libraries were maintained for a classics repository purpose (Kuo 1926; Chiu 1935). Therefore, during the imperial years, libraries were only available to the royal family, the scholarly elite, and the wealthy; there were no public libraries “nor were any asked for or required” (Proett 1974, 6).

2.2.2 From Imperial China to Republican China (1840-1911)

At the dawn of the modern period, a growing number of intellectuals began to advocate for modern education and advise the Qing government to establish public libraries. Forced by the public opinion, the late Qing government initiated a public library movement and encouraged provincial governments and local gentry to establish public libraries (Chiu and Kwei 1926; Cheng 1991). The Hubei Provincial Library, founded by ZHANG Zhidong in Wuchang, Hubei, and the Hunan Provincial Library, founded by WEI Zhaowen in Changsha, Hunan, were among the first public libraries established in China in 1904 (Cheng 1991, 374). In 1910, the Qing government issued the first Chinese library legislation “The Capital Library and Provincial Library’s General Regulation”, 
which prescribed that “the capital city and each provincial capital should establish a
public library first, and then each county, town and district should set up libraries
consecutively” (Xuebu 1910, 15-18). Therefore, the Capital Library was opened to the
public on August 27, 1912 and followed by the grand openings of 32 public libraries
within a few years (MOE 1982, 252-56). Though these early public libraries were ill
housed and inadequately supported (Proett 1974, chap. 1), and were essentially public
libraries “in name and form” (Cheng 1991, 375), it was the first step in the development
of public libraries.

2.2.3 The Republic of China Period (1912-1948)

After the establishment of the Republic of China, modern libraries of all kinds and
sizes began to emerge. According to Chiu, there were seven different types of libraries in
China in the Republic Era: national libraries; provincial libraries; county and city public
libraries; popular libraries, reading rooms and people’s educational centers; children’s
and primary school libraries; school and college libraries; society and government bureau
libraries (Chiu 1935, 1-18). In Yan’s work on Chinese library development from late
Qing to the Sino-Japanese War, he added township, public and private libraries as well as
special libraries to Chiu’s categories (Yan 1983, chap. 4). Based on Chiu’s categories, LI
Xibi and ZHANG Jiaohua collected primary sources on these libraries and published the
commonly cited book, Zhongguo Gu Dai Cang Shu Yu Jin Dai Tu Shu Guan Shi Liao
(The Historical Resources of Ancient Collection and the Modern Library of China), on
the history of libraries in modern China (Li and Zhang 1982). There were dozens of
published library statistics during the Republic Era, which included information on
provincial and city public libraries, popular libraries and school libraries (Yan 1983, chap. 4). According to the first library survey conducted by the Library Association of China in 1925, there were a total of 502 libraries in China: 259 public libraries accounted for more than fifty percent (Xie 2005, 348). Based on the various library surveys conducted from 1916 to 1936, Yan estimated that, until the eve of the Sino-Japanese war, the total number of libraries in China was somewhere between 2,500 and 3,000 (Yan 1983, 111).

CHENG Huanwen, dean of the Sun Yat-sen University Libraries and professor of the School of Information Management of Sun Yat-sen University, believed that the early years of the public library movement, which included the foundations of the first public libraries, the establishments of library management, the widespread spirit of the public library, and the advocacy of European, American and Japanese public libraries, laid a solid foundation for the later development of modern libraries and librarianship in China (Cheng 1991, 372-87). Yan summarized the characteristics of modern library development in China by citing five trends: the purpose of library collection had shifted from storage to usage; libraries had shifted from the privileges of a few to the common wealth of the general public; the method of managing the library had shifted from simple to complex; the library work had shifted from repetition to profession and came with the library science; and the connections among libraries had shifted from random to systematical (Yan 1983, chap. 4).

The progress of the modern public library movement in China received great stimulus. KUO Pingwen, an influential Chinese educator, identified three main events that had influenced the development of public libraries in China. These include modern
education, the Chinese literary renaissance, and the achievement of publishing houses
(Kuo 1926, 189-94). The modern education movement encouraged the spread of
education among the general public; the Chinese literary renaissance popularized the
colloquial language and made it the medium of literary expression; publishing houses,
such as the Commercial Press had published 14,523 books until August 1925 (Kuo 1926,
189-94). Chiu also listed the Literary Renaissance in 1917 and the Mass Education
Movement in 1920 as the great stimulus of the public library movement, but he added the
May Fourth Movement in 1919 as the third stimulus and argued that these three great
social movements were responsible for the sudden and large growth of popular books and
magazines written in colloquial language (Chiu 1926, 195).

There is another factor that influenced the development of public libraries in
China: examples set by the Western world. In the eve of the twentieth century, along with
the Western learning came the trend of advocating for the modern librarianship of the
West and Japan. Cheng concluded that the librarianship of Japan, Europe and America
was introduced indiscriminately to China at the beginning because each Chinese
intellectual had his own view of foreign librarianship based on his various connections
with foreign libraries and librarianship (Cheng 1991, 372-87). Marianne Bastid, a French
sinologist, focused mainly on the importance of Japanese influence on educational reform
in China in the early twentieth century. Supported by such evidence as the complete
translations of Japanese regulations and works, officials visiting Japanese educational
institutions, an increasing number of students studying in Japan and a large number of
Japanese teachers employed in China, she argued that China was attempting to emulate
the Meiji Restoration’s achievements in Japan but failed (Bastid 1988).
By the 1920s, American librarianship began to be the primary type of librarianship introduced to China (Cheng 1991, 373; Lin 1998, 5). Cheng summarized in three points the impact of American librarianship on Chinese librarianship in modern times. First, American librarianship provided the model for the establishment of modern Chinese public libraries. Second, the United States helped trained the first group of modern Chinese librarians. Third, the introduction of American library science and technology pushed the development of modern Chinese librarianship (Cheng 1991, 372-87). LIAO Jing, associate professor of Library Service at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, also acknowledged the American influence on the rise of the modern library system in China, especially the contributions made by Mary Elizabeth Wood (1861-1931). She demonstrated Wood’s important position in China’s library history and analyzed the leadership role Wood and her American-trained Chinese students played in building China’s first library school and establishing public libraries in major Chinese cities (Liao 2009, 20-32). Based on the documents of the International Relations Committee of ALA, located in the ALA archives, TSAY Ming-Yueh, a professor of library and information science from Taiwan, analyzed the ALA’s influence on the development of modern Chinese librarianship from 1924 to 1949. Through various programs such as establishing fellowships for Chinese librarians, sending American library advisors such as Dr. Arthur E. Bostwick to China, and creating projects for the encouragement of public libraries and the ALA China Programme, Tsay argued that ALA introduced new techniques of library service to China. It also shared the American library ideas with China, such as “the public right to access information, intellectual freedom of
the public, and libraries as social institutions that provide public self-education” (Tsay 1998, 275-88).

2.3 Chinese Childhood

The traditional attitudes toward children might be traced back as far as prehistoric China (Kinney 1995; Farquhar 1999). Anne Behnke Kinney, a professor of Chinese with a focus on the history of childhood in China from University of Virginia, showed that the early documentations of childhood in China began during the Han dynasty (206 B.C.– A.D. 220) (Kinney 1995, 2). The thinkers of the Han dynasty were the first to discuss childhood in philosophical discourse, educational theory and historical writing (Kinney 1995, 17). Kinney attributed the Han dynasty’s interest in the child to the “establishment of Confucianism as the state creed with its emphasis on educating youth” (Kinney 1995, 2). She also suggested that Han educators used the Xiao Jing (Classic of Filial Piety) as a text to prepare children for the moral transformation and the filial duties they would later assume as adults. Mary Isabella Bryson, a British missionary in China in the late nineteenth century, confirmed by her own observation that until the late Imperial era, filial piety was still the most important duty instilled into children’s minds, as the proverb says, “of the hundred virtues the chief is filial piety” (Bryson 1885, 51). Kinney concluded that the early Confucians considered childhood not as a valuable stage of human development but a transformational period necessary for the culmination of a virtuous adult (Kinney 1995, 17-56).

Nevertheless, many children, especially girls in China never had a chance to
fulfill the filial obligation. In pre-modern China, children were treated quite differently based on gender. Male children were preferred because they would contribute labor and wealth to the family, while female children would leave the family after marriage and contribute nothing (Waltner 1995, 193-218). Male children were regarded as living representatives, connecting ancestors with descendant. However, baby girls were characterized as “dangerous to the stability of the struggling family” (Waltner 1995, 210). In ancient China, families would “practice female infanticide in an attempt to reserve limited resources for rearing male children” (Kinney 1995, 7). Ann Waltner, a history professor with a focus on Chinese history from the University of Minnesota, demonstrated that there was evidence documenting the custom of killing unwanted female girls at birth throughout recorded pre-modern Chinese history (Waltner 1995, 193-218).

After the Opium War, China broke down the wall of exclusiveness and opened the gate to foreigners. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, a group of western missionaries and anthropologists went to China: they were interested in Chinese children’s lives, and they became the first observers of childhood in a Chinese setting. As Issac Taylor Headland, an American missionary to China noted: “Nothing in China is more common than babies. Nothing more helpless. Nothing more troublesome. Nothing more attractive. Nothing more interesting” (Headland 1901, 33). Bryson documented the lives of children in Chinese homes and narrated the different lives of Chinese boys and girls in the 1880s (Bryson 1885). While boys were sent to school to learn the “extremely dry and uninteresting” lessons, girls were kept at home, taught to assist with weaving and embroidering work, entrusted with the care of baby or other kind
of work (Bryson 1885, 42). Headland focused on the Chinese methods of exercise and amusement for children and argued that though the majority of children in China were very poor, they had a very good time with the ample provisions of nursery rhymes, games, toys, shows and stories (Headland 1901). After consulting Chinese nursery lore, Headland argued that Chinese people love their children because “there is no language in the world which contains children’s songs expressive of more keen tender affection than some of those sung to children in China” (Headland 1901, 16). Terhune further supplemented the observation with scenes such as at the barber’s, playing music instruments and flying kites (Terhune 1910). Though Chinese boys and girls were treated as little men and women, wearing the same kind of clothes as those of their grandparents and made familiar with all the rules of behavior, Headland believed that they were little people as were the children of other countries (Headland 1901, 46).

Prevailing notions of childhood changed drastically during the late Qing and early Republic Era. Many modern intellectuals, such as HU Shi, the prominent enlightened scholar in twentieth-century China, advocated for the “the symbolic meaning of childhood and the treatment of children as a measurement of accomplishments of civilization” (Hsiung 2005, XIV). Catherine Pease noted that while children were always a symbol of renewal in Chinese culture, modern culture particularly emphasized the “freshness of the child’s perceptions and the relative ease with which the child moves across traditional social barriers” (Pease 1995, 280). Mary Ann Farquhar, an Australian scholar in Chinese culture, further explained that in the past, children represented the “continuity of family and traditional value” (Farquhar 1998, 1). In the late Qing and early Republic Era of radical social change, reformers reinterpreted this ideology and
positioned children as a representation of “national, not family continuity and evolutionary change, not unchanging tradition” (Farquhar 1998, 1). Pease paralleled individual’s transition from childhood to adulthood in this era with China’s progress toward modern nationhood (Pease 1995, 279). Jon L. Saari, the author of the frequently cited work: *Legacies of Childhood: Growing Up Chinese in a Time of Crisis*, also chose to focus on this time of crisis (1890-1920) and analyzed the lives of children who later became the generation of educated youth in the Republic Era (Saari 1990). He believed that Chinese views of childhood in the late Qing period were based on two assumptions: the first was that “the world was a threatening place to born into” because of human’s incomplete understanding of the outer environment; the second was that “childhood was the setting for an either/or struggle to become a moral being” (Saari 1990, 7). Therefore, he argued that this image of children as “weak, vulnerable, and dependent beings” (Saari 1990, 7) governed Chinese people to closely protect and strictly instruct children to make sure of their survival and become worthy adults (Saari, 1990).

In ancient China, the Sishu (old-style private school) served as the place for children’s moral education and self-cultivation and was reinforced by Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism. It typically consisted of one class of boys only, and was taught by one instructor (Borthwick 1983, 17). Confucian classics, such as *Three Character Classic*, Four Books and Five Classics written in classical Chinese were the main texts for students of all ages to memorize and learn. Sally Borthwick, an Australian scholar on Chinese affairs, noted that the Sishu not only “gave the child adult texts but demanded of him adult standards of behavior fitting the stereotype of the ‘educated man’” (Borthwick
1983, 33). Chinese parents sent their sons to school to help them outgrow childish behavior.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, this method of education was challenged. Educational reformers in early twentieth century China believed that modern schools would bring power and prosperity to the country and inspire the nation to modernize. A plan was launched for modern educational reform with the aim of mass mobilization. “New” subjects such as science, mathematics, physical education, and vocational education were introduced in the new curriculum (Borthwick 1983). The traditional examination system was abolished, the coherent school system was established, and the number of primary schools was increased. According to the survey conducted by the Ministry of Education in 1929, a total of 7,937,558 students enrolled in 263,432 kindergarten and primary schools, which accounted for around 17% of school age children (6-12 years) at that time. Further, the number of students enrolled in schools more than tripled from 2,793,633 in the beginning of the Republic of China in 1912 (MOE 1933, 999-1003). The foundations for modern education were established within a single decade in the early twentieth century (Bastid, 1988).

The period between the advent of the New Culture Movement in 1917 and the Sino-Japanese War of 1937 witnessed an “unprecedented explosion of discourse for and about children, childhood and child development” (Jones 2001, 103). Andrew Jones, a professor in Chinese at the University of California, Berkeley, illustrated that this explosion of discourse involved new academic disciplines, such as child psychology and educational psychology (Jones 2011, 99-125). It also encouraged a circulation of knowledge among the general public about the nature of children and childhood.
Children were not treated as incomplete little people but complete individuals with inner and outer lives (Zhou 1920, 1-7). Jones also argued that Republican China discovered childhood as an “epistemological, ideological, institutional and even commercial” category (Jones 2011, 11). A new culture industry began to depend on the children’s market as a major source of revenue (Jones 2011, 112).

Society’s recognition of children and childhood reached a pinnacle as China celebrated its first Children’s Day in 1932. In response to a proposal made by the China Salesian Society to designate a national children’s day, the Nationalist Government designated April 4 as Children’s Day in 1931, and it issued the Children’s Day Commemoration Outline (Wang 1942, 36-37). The goal for celebrating Children Day was to “encourage children’s interests, inspire children’s love for nation, community and family, and arose society’s attention to children’s well-being” (MOE 1931, 37-39). Since 1932, schools, libraries, museums, and other social education institutions held special activities, such as ceremonies, exhibits, contests, and funfairs, to celebrate Children’s Day.

Additional organizations and agencies held programs and promotions to recognize children. On 4 April 1933, for instance, in Shanghai city alone, 35 hospitals provided free vaccinations for children; 28 parks were open to children at no cost; 26 bookstores offered discounts on book sales (Sun 2012, 19). These activities received massive coverage by nationwide influential newspapers, such as Shen Bao (Shanghai News) and Zhong Yang Ri Bao (Central Daily News), as well as local media, such as Wuhan Ri Bao (Wuhan Daily News) (Sun 2012, 16-17). The first Children’s Day was celebrated in over twenty provinces and cities, including Shanghai, Nanjing, Beijing, and Tianjin. In
subsequent years, celebrations of the occasion expanded from major cities to include most cities in the country, including some rural areas (Huang 2008, 44). To develop Children’s Day and further advance the causes of child welfare, the Nationalist Government designated 1 August 1935 to 31 July 1936 as National Children’s Year. Throughout the year, the central government led a series of nationwide movements to promote children’s well-being: drafting laws and regulations for children’s welfare, initiating various children’s programs, promoting compulsory education, and improving conditions for children’s care.

Designating Children’s Day and Children’s Year marked the culmination of society’s attention to children and their well-being, which demonstrated the improvement of children’s status in the Republic Era. Moreover, the celebration of Children’s Day and Children’s Year in turn promoted the society’s recognition of children and childhood.

2.4 Chinese Children’s Literature

Peter Hunt, a British scholar and professor emeritus in children’s literature, perceived that the history of children’s books throughout the world had similar patterns: from no books published specifically for children, to a few books intended for broadly educational purposes or text books for school curriculum, to stories written specially for children, to the emergence of children’s books of various interests (Hunt 2005, 5). He quoted Sheila Ray’s observation that developing countries in the twentieth century went through all the stages of developing children’s books in a relatively short time – thirty or forty years – compared to European countries’ five hundred years (Hunt 2005, 5). That applied to developing China. Confucius said, “Young people are not human; they are
merely in the process of becoming human.” Historically, there were no literary works published specifically for children in China; there were only a few Confucian classics, mentioned earlier, such as *Three Character Classic* or *Instruction for Girls* intended for educational purposes and good courtesy (Chen 2006, 13-19). Literary works for children – that is, non-didactic texts – were not widely published in China until the “discovery of children” and the New Culture Movement in the Republic Era.

Before the advent of modern children’s literature in China, fables and folk stories were the most popular and accessible form of literature for children. CHEN Minjie, in her doctoral dissertation for the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois, noted that Chinese children shared a great deal of popular reading materials with adults (Chen 2011, 17-18). The most prominent example is the story, *Journey to the West*. This fantasy tale about the Monkey King’s adventurous pilgrimage to the West, in its various adaptations and performances (comic books, oral storytelling, operas, TV series, etc.) was the favorite among Chinese children (Chen 2011, 17-18). Mary Hayes Davis, in her retelling of Chinese fables and folk stories in English, argued that Chinese literature “did possess the fable” and that these stories were “familiar in the home and school life of the children in China” (Davis 1908, 6). LI Lifang, a professor in Chinese literature, believed that collecting fairy tales suitable for children was one of the foundations of Chinese children’s literature and several scholars listed specific standards for collecting literature from traditional fairy tales for children (Li 2007).

Translation of Western children’s literature was another source for children’s reading before the born of native Chinese works. LI Li, a professor of translation studies, studied children’s literature in translation from 1898 to 1919 and identified 120 titles
translated into Chinese during this era (Li 2005, 103-06). Following the translation of *Around the World in Eighty Days* in 1900, works of science fictions from French, Japan, Holland and the United States were translated into Chinese and welcomed (Li 2005, 103-06). European and Middle-Eastern classics like the *Grimm’s Fairy Tales, Alice in Wonderland, Arabian Nights: Tales from One Thousand and One Nights* and stories by Hans Christian Andersen were translated and widely available in 29 magazines (Li 2005, 103-04). In 1909, the first and most popular children’s literature series in China – *Tong Hua (Fairy Tales)* – appeared in Shanghai. ZHU Ziqiang, a professor of Chinese children’s literature, remarked that translated works of Western children’s literature was considered more qualified for the *Tong Hua* series than adaptations from Chinese historical stories on account of the latter’s lack of originality and representativeness (Zhu 2000, 144). Of all the 77 fairly tales edited by SUN Yuxiu from 1909 to 1919, 48 were translated from Western works while only 29 were adapted from Chinese historical stories (Li 2005, 104). It is commonly acknowledged that the translation of foreign children’s literature provided Chinese writers with models and played a significant role in developing native Chinese children’s literature (Li 2007; Chen 2006; Jones 2011).

In 1920, ZHOU Zuoren (1885-1967), a writer, translator and advocate of literary reform in the May Fourth Movement, was the first person to foster the phrase “children’s literature” (Er Tong de Wen Xue) in China (Zhou 1920, 1-7). In his remarkable speech, he argued that children should be provided with literature that would meet and cultivate their age-appropriate interests (Zhou 1920, 1-7). He divided children’s literature into several categories according to each stage of childhood development and recommended that young children (from 3 to 10 years old) were given rhymes, fairy tales, and stories
about the natural world; adolescents were given poems, historical legends, realistic stories and drama (Zhou 1920, 1-7).

LU Xun (1881-1936), one of the major writers of the Republic Era and the “commander of China’s cultural revolution” (Mao 1940, 21-39), was also a spokesperson for children and children’s literature. In A Madman’s Diary, the first modern short story in China, LU Xun ended with the famous cry “save the children” (Farquhar 1998, 2). Along with LU Xun, many great writers of the Republic Era such as MAO Dun, YE Shengtao, ZHANG Tianyi, BING Xin and FENG Zikai were actively involved in writing a distinctly modern children’s literature (Jones 2011, 104). The emergence of modern children’s literature, written in an easily accessible vernacular language, is part of the May Fourth literature that was motivated by the New Culture Movement of 1917.

Mary Ann Farquhar, an Australian expert in Chinese culture, contributed the most systematic study of native children’s literature in China by tracing the evolution of this genre from the early twentieth century through the 1970s (Farquhar 1999). In her study, which was recognized with an award from the International Children’s Literature Association, Farquhar identified the distinguishing characteristics of Chinese children’s literature, which included the emergence of the child from the confines of Confucian education, the flourishing of children’s literature in the May Fourth period, and the production of children’s literature as connected with serious political concerns (Farquhar 1999). LI Lifang discussed the localization process of children’s literature and argued that modern children’s literature as an emergent force played a vital role in promoting early children’s libraries in China (Li 2007, chap. 8).

The advent of modern children’s literature in the Republic Era also fostered
growth for publishing businesses. The Shanghai Commercial Press launched the most popular Chinese children’s magazine, *Er Tong Shi Jie (Children’s World)*, in 1922 (Chen 2011, 21). Inaugurated in the same year, *Xiao Peng You (Little Friend)* received similar popularity. Each boasted biweekly circulations of over 20,000 copies (Jones 2011, 120). In the 1930s, there were over a dozen periodicals for children, including *Xiao Xue Sheng (Little Student)*, *Xian Dai Er Tong (Modern Child)*, and *Er Tong Za Zhi (Children’s Magazine)* (Jin 1998, 17-19).

In addition to mass-market magazines, LI Ya, a professor of publishing, introduced the publication of children’s books in the Republic Era and used the Commercial Press as an example (Li 2007, 9-12). From 1897 to 1949, the Commercial Press published 88 children’s books and 14 children’s book series (Li 2007, 10).\(^5\) Li found such niche-marketed books to be complimentary to textbooks, and these ultimately cultivated children’s reading interests.

The Republic Era witnessed an increased literacy level among the general public, the advent of modern school systems, the development of modern public libraries, the growth of child welfare, and the flourishing of children’s literature. In this review of the historical background of the genesis of Chinese children’s libraries, it becomes apparent that a fuller understanding of youth services librarianship in this period is needed. The following chapter addresses this need.

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\(^5\) Children’s book series were large in size and rich in content and they were mainly targeted at children’s libraries; one of the famous book series “Fairy Tales” had 102 titles published till 1916.
Chapter 3: Youth Services in the Republic Era

A multiplicity of factors influenced the genesis of children’s libraries in China. With child-centered service idea in mind, there emerged library polices that strongly advocated the necessity of library services to children, separate children’s rooms that admitted children as readers, indigenous children’s literature and separate children’s collection that provided materials for children’s reading, youth programs and services that connected children with texts, as well as pioneering librarians that promoted these services. This chapter examines the elements that contributed to the development of youth services in public libraries in the Republic Era.

3.1 Library Policy

The first library legislation appeared in China in 1910. Subsequently, a series of library legislations, regulations, and resolutions were issued by the central government, the Ministry of Education, local governments, and national-professional associations. These library polices served as guidelines for the development of modern Chinese librarianship and significantly promoted the establishment of public libraries and children’s libraries in China.

3.1.1 General Library Regulations

As part of the Qing Dynasty’s last effort at reform, Xue Bu (the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture of the Qing government) proposed an eight-year development plan to prepare for constitutionalism, starting in 1909. In the “Memoranda
of Annual Preparations to the Throne,” Xue Bu scheduled to promulgate library rules in 1909, establish a capital library in 1909, and establish provincial libraries in each province by 1910 (Xuebu 1909, 1-5). In 1910, Xue Bu submitted a twenty-articles draft on library regulations to the Throne, as planned. Hence, the Qing court issued the first Chinese library legislation, “The Capital Library and Provincial Library’s General Regulation,” in 1910. The first article of the regulation specified that “the purpose of libraries are to preserve the national treasure, to educate the general public, to facilitate research for scholars, to offer references for students and to provide reading resources for all.” The second article articulated that “The capital city and each provincial capital should establish a public library first, and then each county, town and district should set up libraries consecutively.” Other articles in the legislation included guidelines and suggestions for library location and building, library budget and operation, library organizational structure and personnel, as well as procedures for acquisition, preservation, and circulation (Xuebu 1910, 15-18).

This regulation also defined the legal status of “library”. Afterward, the term “library” permanently replaced the term “book repository” (Fan 2004, 174). After the decree of this legislation, provincial, county and city governments across the country began to establish public libraries, which indicated the rise of modern public libraries in China. One national library and 15 provincial libraries were established in China by the end of 1911 (MOE 1982, 252-56). As the first library legislation in China, this regulation was regarded as a milestone for the development of the modern Chinese public library. It signified the advancement of Chinese librarianship from mere advocacy to establishment by national laws; from the financial support of non-government affiliated intellectuals to
the financial backing of the government and from mimicking European, Japanese and American library systems to working out its own rules. It is indeed a great leap forward for Chinese librarianship and reflects the greater demands that come with academic and cultural developments (Cheng 1991, 375). However, with the Qing dynasty’s fall in 1911, this first legislation’s government endorsement ceased.

Upon establishing the Republic of China in 1912, the Ministry of Education replaced the Xue Bu as the government agency to supervise the development of libraries. The public libraries established by the Qing government were confined to the capital city and provincial capital city levels only. Book preservation remained the primary goal of those libraries, and the readers served were mainly educated elites. Relics of old book repositories remained. Those public libraries were only “in name and form, in practice and content, the old feudal library retained its hold” (Cheng 1991, 375). A different kind of public library emerged to provide popular materials for the purposes of the general reading public in China. Popular libraries could be easily established in all cities, counties, schools and factories. Such libraries collected only popular materials and were easily accessible to the general public.

To guide the development of these kinds of public libraries, the Ministry of Education promoted two library regulations in 1915: “The Ministry of Education Popular Library Regulation” and “The Ministry of Education Library Regulation.” “The Ministry of Education Popular Library Regulation” stipulated that a popular library should “collect all kinds of popular materials for the public’s reading” and should be “open to the public free of charge” (MOE 1982, 184-85). This regulation also included guidelines for the library’s budget, personnel, and administration (MOE 1982, 184-85). Consequently,
popular libraries around the country developed at an unprecedented speed. A survey revealed that there were 237 popular libraries in 21 provinces by 1916 (MOE 1982, 256-57). “The Ministry of Education Library Regulation” confirmed the preservation role of provincial and city libraries but stipulated that these public libraries should also collect all kinds of materials for reading purposes (MOE 1982, 185-86). The regulation further standardized the operation of public libraries by requiring public libraries to submit to the Ministry of Education information about the library’s name, location, budget, collection, floor plan, rules, and open hours and to send annual reports (MOE 1982, 185-86). By 1916, the number of provincial and city level libraries increased to 23 (MOE 1982, 252-56). Moreover, these library regulations provided guidelines for local governments to develop social educational institutions that resulted in the establishment of public libraries in large quantities. The Popular Library Regulation, in particular, promoted the development of public libraries in rural areas and extended library services to less-educated populations, including children.

3.1.2 Special Resolutions on Youth Services

Special resolutions on youth services derived primarily from the national conference of education and library associations. Prior to the advent of a national library professional association, the Library Education Division of the Chinese National Association for the Advancement of Education (CNAAE) was the sole national forum for librarians to participate, communicate, and cooperate. Since its first meeting in 1922, the Library Education Division served as the major entity for advocating the course of youth librarianship.
At the first annual conference in 1922 of the CNAAE, three resolutions for children’s libraries were proposed at the divisional meeting of the Library Education Division (CNAAE 1922, 556-61). DAI Zhiqian, the chair of the Division, proposed that popular libraries should include children’s departments, unfortunately, no one seconded Dai’s proposal, and the proposal failed without discussion (Wang 1942, 53-55). Despite its failure to pass, this proposal initiated the groundwork for future discussions on the need of children’s libraries. HONG Youfeng, the co-chair of the Division, proposed that adjacent primary schools should unite to organize mobile children’s libraries in schools. Eventually, the resolution was passed, given reasons for why reading habits should be developed at an early age and that children’s library would be an ideal place for children to spend their spare time. The resolution suggested that school libraries in the vicinity should unite as a group and purchase appropriate reading materials for children. In theory, the shared library collections would be divided into several parts and be placed in each school by rotation (Wang 1942, 53-55). This resolution to build mobile libraries promoted coordination and cooperation among school libraries. If school libraries adopted the resolution, children would benefit by having access to a greater number of books. SHEN Zurong, a faculty member of Boone Library School, proposed that all primary and secondary schools should be equipped with school libraries; the proposal was passed (Wang 1942, 53-55). This resolution strengthened the connection between school and library, emphasizing a library’s role in assisting school education. By promoting children’s library as “a place with appropriate reading materials for children to develop their reading habits” (Wang 1942, 55), these resolutions argued for the

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6Dai will be discussed later in the “Librarians” section.
7Hong will be discussed later in the “Librarians” section.
8Shen will be discussed later in the “Librarians” section.
importance of library services available to children and served as starting points for the Library Education Division’s lasting advocacy of youth services and youth librarianship.

At the second annual conference in 1923 of the CNAAE, two resolutions relevant to youth services were proposed in the divisional meeting of the Library Education Division. The first resolution proposed that the regional education association was responsible for selecting and promoting children’s literature. The second resolution asked for the library’s education division to compile a children’s book bibliography for primary and secondary school libraries’ reference (Wang 1942, 55-56). These two resolutions were both about the selection and suggestion of children’s books, implying that guidelines were needed for selecting children’s books and standards to be applied to children’s literature.

In 1924, no resolutions pertaining to children’s libraries were made at the third annual conference of the CNAAE.

At the fourth annual conference in 1925 of the CNAAE, a resolution was passed that demanded public libraries and popular libraries to add a children’s department. The resolution was one of four passed in the Library Education Division’s meeting, which was chaired by YUAN Tongli (Wang 1942, 56-57). This resolution is particularly significant. First of all, by adding children’s departments and guiding their reading, children’s libraries served an indispensable role in cultivating young readers and future library patrons. It was believed that children’s libraries would improve the nation’s literacy level and promote the development of libraries and librarianship. Further, school libraries were already established in most primary schools by 1925, and children welcomed these libraries so much that it was difficult to find vacancy during the library’s

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9Yuan will be discussed later in the “Librarians” section.
open hours. However, funding for education and school libraries was incredibly limited such that not all children could gain access. In rural areas, for example, not all schools could afford to operate a school library; in urban areas, some school libraries were equipped with only well-worn books for adults instead of children’s books. Therefore, children’s departments in public libraries needed to lend their support and provide library services for the benefit of an increased number of children. Moreover, for those children who could not continue education after graduating from primary school (and thus have access to its library), the absence of public libraries for children meant that there would be no library services for such students at all. To solve this issue, a children’s library became necessarily for under-privileged children to pursue self-education after formal schooling.

In response, the Library Education Division passed this resolution and published two solutions. First, public libraries and popular libraries should allocate a particular room for the purpose of a “children’s department” and assign trained personnel to supervise the department. Second, if necessary, the children’s department could establish branches near a primary school or other convenient location (CNAAE 1925, 27-28). As the first national policy on youth services in public libraries, this resolution argued for the necessity and indispensability of a children’s library. It called for the establishment of children’s departments and the creation of posts for children’s librarians at public libraries. As the resolution was addressed and passed at a national education conference, the major emphasis was on the education function of children’s libraries: to cultivate future nationals. This resolution served as grounds rationalizing the necessity of children’s libraries and, to some extent, promoted the development of children’s libraries.
The early years of children’s library policies were promoted under the administration of the CNAAE. The Library Education Division’s resolutions boasted a greater number of advocacy and promotion functions than enforcement functions. After the founding of the Library Association of China in 1925, it became the primary determinant on matters related to library regulation.

At the first annual conference of the LAC in 1929, over 100 library scholars and librarians from across the country gathered at the University of Nanking to discuss ninety proposals on various issues. These included the promotion of library services, library administration, library education, library technique, and library building. As regards children’s libraries, one issue was addressed at the conference. The proposal stated the necessity for primary schools to establish children’s libraries. Four reasons, in particular, were given to support the proposal: 1) libraries could cultivate children’s reading habits at a early age; 2) libraries could aid education in the classrooms; 3) libraries could promote children’s reading interests; 4) libraries could provide appropriate reading materials for children (Wang 1942, 58-59). The reasons were well articulated and the attending librarians acknowledged the importance of children’s libraries. The proposal was passed as a resolution. The resolution further suggested that adjacent primary schools could cooperate and jointly establish a children’s library if necessary (Wang 1942, 58-59). The participant schools would share the library collection and related expenses. To ensure the resolution’s implementation, the LAC asked the Ministry of Education to send a memo to all provincial departments of education and to order the education departments to check that all primary schools have library services for children (LAC 1929, 5-14). Furthermore, the discussion of issues on children’s libraries at the nation’s library
association’s first annual conference demonstrated the Chinese library society’s attention to children’s libraries and incited nationwide promotion, development and improvement of youth services in subsequent years.

In 1933, at the second annual conference of the LAC, a resolution was passed to build independent children’s libraries in every city and county and to establish children’s reading rooms in every library (LAC 1933, 54-55). It was generally agreed that recreational reading in children’s spare time could cultivate their reading interests and maintain their reading skills. However, most libraries at that time were intended for adults’ reading and research and were not appropriate for reading at the children’s level. Therefore, a proposal on the establishment of independent children’s libraries and children’s reading rooms was initiated. The proposal argued that the children’s department should be separate from adults’ departments because special equipment and guidance were needed for children’s reading (LAC 1933, 54-55). This resolution was believed to be indispensable for supplementing school education, cultivating children’s reading habits, and promoting compulsory education. As a result, the LAC published a official letter demanding that each city and county establish independent children’s libraries and stipulated that all libraries should be equipped with children’s departments (LAC 1933, 54-55).

Local governments responded to this resolution in a timely manner and became actively involved in promoting children’s libraries in their region. For example, in 1933, the Guangdong Provincial Department of Education forwarded this resolution to the province’s county and city governments as well as the provincial library to enforce its implementation (Guangdong 1933, 85-86). In 1934, the Hebei Provincial Department of
Education forwarded this resolution to local governments and to libraries within the province. Besides ordering all libraries to establish children’s reading rooms, the education department emphasized that each primary school should allocate resources for children’s libraries within its budget (Hong 1934, 34). In the same year, with the intention of compensating for the limitations of school education (and to develop children’s reading habits), the Henan Provincial Department of Education forwarded the resolution to each county’s education bureau and mandated the establishment of children’s libraries, including children’s reading rooms in existing libraries (Henan 1934, 3). This LAC’s resolution was the most influential library policy on children’s libraries to that point. It created public awareness about the importance of children’s libraries and significantly increased the total numbers of children’s libraries.

Another resolution pertaining to school libraries was also passed at the second annual conference of the LAC. The resolution asked for the Ministry of Education to issue an order requiring provincial, county, and city education bureaus to invite library scholars as consultants on school library development (LAC 1933, 54-55). Based on the fact that most school libraries were stocked with age-inappropriate collections, a lack of proper management, and insufficient number of school librarians, the conference library administration panel proposed to set up a school library consultant post (LAC 1933, 54-55). The school library consultant would be a library expert that was capable of guiding the library’s management, training the library staff or group of volunteers, and promoting cooperation among school libraries (LAC 1933, 54-55). Therefore, the resolution suggested that provincial departments of education, as well as city and county education bureaus, hire a library scholar as a school library consultant to guide the work of all of the
school libraries within a given region (LAC 1933, 54-55). The school library consultant would be expected to visit each school library and to provide oral as well as written advice in a timely manner (LAC 1933, 54-55). Also, the consultant would be responsible for organizing the school library’s seminar on a monthly or yearly basis, and to lecture on library science, as well as assist school library staff with practical problems (LAC 1933, 54-55). This resolution became a solution to the problems of school libraries, such as inappropriate collection building, unscientific library techniques, as well as chaotic library management. It provided a practical way for school libraries to thrive under limited budgets and contribute to school libraries’ flourishing in the 1930s.

In 1936, the third annual conference of the LAC was held. Three resolutions on youth services were passed at this conference. The first resolution was a follow-up to the previous year’s proposal to the Ministry of Education, which asked to enforce provinces, cities, counties, and public primary schools without children’s libraries to establish one as soon as possible (Wang 1942, 60-62). The second resolution proposed to establish a children’s library advisory committee in the LAC (Wang 1942, 60-62). This resolution indicated the library society’s dedication to advocate and support library services to children. The third resolution was announced during the library technique session. It proposed to draft a classification system for children’s books so that children’s libraries across the country could use it as reference (Li 1936, 1-5). This resolution would promote cooperation among children’s libraries, accelerate the development of children’s collections, and anticipate the arrival of additional nationwide guidelines on library services for children. Despite the goodwill and promise of these resolutions, the outbreak
of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, and the unstable political and social situations in most parts of China, made these resolutions impossible to implement.

Through media dissemination and responses by local governments and agencies, the CNAAE and LAC’s resolutions received a high volume of public attention and support. Although neither the CNAAE nor the LAC had power to enforce their resolutions and these resolutions could not function as government regulations, they did provide guidelines for local governments to develop children’s libraries and facilitated the unprecedented development of youth services in the 1920s and 1930s.

The first library legislation decreed by the Qing court laid a solid foundation for the development of public libraries in China. The promulgation of the 1915 Ministry of Education’s library regulations indicated the advancement of modern Chinese librarianship and further promoted the establishment of modern public libraries in large quantities. Although the national government and the Ministry of Education failed to issue policies regarding the development of youth services, the two national professional associations – the Library Education Division of the Chinese National Association for the Advancement of Education and the Library Association of China – published a series of resolutions to advocate the importance of youth services and to promote the development of children’s libraries in the Republic Era.

3.2 Reading Rooms and Facilities

A year after its founding, the capital popular library established a children’s reading room in a rented, residential property in 1914 (Beijing 1994, 3). This was the first children’s reading room in the capital city, Beijing. Later, Jilin, Zhejiang, Jiangxi and
other provinces also opened children’s reading rooms in their public libraries. In 1917, 
the Tianjin Social Education Bureau established the first independent children’s library in 
Tianjin (Zheng 1990, 10). By 1934, there were 93 independent children’s libraries in 
China (Chiu 1935, 16). In 1936, according to surveys conducted by the Zhejiang Public 
Library, of all the 34 provincial libraries, 19 mentioned specifically that they had at least one separate children’s reading room, with a capacity that varied from 12 to 120 seats 
(Yan 1983, 63-100).

To attract children to the library, a functional and friendly space would be crucial. 
The welcoming environment of a beautifully designed children’s library would be 
inviting and encourage children to return. CAI Wensen’s first request to build a 
children’s library was in 1909. From that time through 1937, ideas and practices for 
planning the children’s reading room and designing children’s library furniture and 
equipment evolved greatly.

3.2.1 Library Building 

In the early twentieth century, there were no specially designed children’s 
libraries. Most children’s reading areas were comprised of a makeshift room or two that 
were apportioned from rented residential properties. As CAI Wensen noted, children 
could benefit from libraries no matter how small they were; therefore, there was no need 
to construct a new building for library use (Cai 1909, 50). Children’s libraries could be 
set in residential properties, public spaces, or school classrooms (Cai 1909, 50). In 1905, 
Hubei Provincial Library, one of the first public libraries in China, bought a residential 
property with 10 rooms and expanded it to a 2,401 square meter (around 25, 844 square
feet) library building with 20 rooms, and set up a children’s reading room in one of these rooms (Yu 2007, 37). In 1914, the Capital Popular Library opened its children’s reading room in a rented residential property. In some rural areas, a corner of a room holding children’s books could be referred to as a children’s library. Children could read in various places, including the woods, the meadow, and the valley (Lu 1935, 20).

As an increasing number of libraries constructed their own buildings (instead of renting), discussions began as to how to plan a children’s library. Location was the first aspect to consider when setting up a children’s library. A site with ample light and fresh air that was surrounded by an expansive landscape and located in a tranquil neighborhood would be an ideal place for building an independent children’s library (Wang 1936, 38). For a children’s reading room or children’s department within a public library, “location” referred to the designated children’s space. In general, the children’s room should be on the first floor\(^{10}\) with ample sunlight and adequate space, and away from the interference of the adult’s reading rooms (Xu 1936, 73). The suggestions on light, air and environment were made from the perspective of children’s physical and psychological development. An ample amount of light, especially sunlight was necessary for protecting children’s vision while reading. Fresh air would be beneficial to their health, and an appealing environment would encourage their reading interests. An example of such a design is the Hubei Provincial Library that chose the foot of a mountain as its new site in 1936, building a library building with three floors. The children’s reading room was located on the first floor (Yu 2007, 39).

Space was another primary concern when planning a children’s library. A small

\(^{10}\) Out of the consideration for children’s safety, Xu suggested that the children’s room should be on the first floor so that they do not need to walk up and down stairs.
children’s library would be overcrowded during peak hours, thus making young readers uncomfortable and preventing their interest in going to the library. WANG Bainian, a pioneer youth services librarian, calculated that each reader should occupy 12 square feet of space in a children’s library. Therefore, a library to seat 50 children should have a space of 600 square feet (Wang 1936, 38). Compared to today’s standard recommendation of 25 to 40 square feet per seat, and approximately 30 square feet per seat on average, the space allocated for the children’s library in the Republic Era was substantially smaller (Dahlgren 2009, 16). However, given the limited budget of most libraries and the single use of library space at that time, the relatively small library space managed to meet the goal of serving young readers.

3.2.2 Reading Tables and Chairs

At first no specially designed library furniture existed to accommodate young readers. At public libraries, children were expected to use the same reading tables and chairs as adults. In school libraries, children used the same desks and chairs as in their classrooms. In response to research on children’s physical and mental development and the innovative idea of a child-centered service, librarians acknowledged the relation between appropriate library equipment and children’s healthy growth. Discussions about the standards and arrangements for children’s library reading tables and chairs began in the early 1920s and continued through the late 1930s.

In 1922, LIU Guojun, the leader of Chinese modern library movement, proposed a standard on the height for a children’s reading table and reading chair based on the physical development of children. His proposal included three different table and chair
sets, aimed for children aged 5-8 years, 8-10 years and 10-14 years, separately (Liu 1922, 1-7). ZENG Xianwen, a library scholar from Boone Library School, seconded Liu’s standards and argued that children’s reading tables and chairs were not aimed to be luxurious but aimed to fit. Reading tables and chairs were qualified as long as they were appropriate for the children’s height and would not impede their development (Zeng 1929, 127-35). LU Jingshan was more practical than Liu in making suggestions, given that most children’s libraries were on a limited budget. In his monograph on children’s library, he suggested that regular school desks and chairs were fine for children to read (Lu 1935, 26). Therefore, he only listed one kind of reading table and chair, which would be appropriate for most children (Lu 1935, 26).

Moreover, Wang insisted that libraries should consult experts on children’s libraries or ask for professional opinions from local library associations before purchasing any furniture or equipment. He understood that the most important consideration was the children’s physical and psychological development (Wang 1936, 44). Further, he separated children according to categories – high-graders (grade 5 and grade 6) and low-graders (grade 3 and grade 4). As such, he suggested that reading tables were built based on the physical difference between high-graders and low-graders; tables for high-graders were higher and longer than tables for low-graders, and the same principle applied to reading chairs (Wang 1936, 45). Given that most children went to the library during one or two hours’ school breaks (their time in the library would not exceed two hours), reading chairs could be stools without a back support, and the shape of the reading chairs could vary. Round, square, and rectangle shapes were all acceptable (Wang 1936, 46).
XU Jiabi, the librarian from National Beiping library, proposed that the design for a children’s library should be based on children’s physical appearances as well as their natural instincts: short, active, social, curious and responsive (Xu 1936, 71). He suggested that the type of reading tables and chairs should suit the style of the library building, the needs of children, and the size of the reading room (Xu 1936, 79). For instance, round tables could conveniently set readers apart and were suitable for accompanied reading; rectangular tables were better suited for writing and reference purposes (Xu 1936, 79). Other shapes, such as square, elliptical, and triangular were all suitable in certain situations. Indeed, foldable tables and chairs were acceptable in the room for special occasions (Xu 1936, 79). Furthermore, children’s libraries might employ different table shapes to avoid tedium. Typically, children were divided into three groups based on age: group 1 included children aged 5-8 years; group 2 included children aged 8-12 years; and group 3 included children aged 12-16 years (Xu 1936, 80). Consequently, children’s reading tables and desks could have three different heights. The children might also be separated into two groups: group 1 included children aged 5-10 years; and group 2 included children aged 11-16 years (Xu 1936, 80). For this design, two sets of reading tables and chairs would be sufficient. If the budget was severely limited, a single-sized table would suffice (Xu 1936, 80).

In practice, the Library of the FPSBNU had taken the above principles into consideration. Its library equipment purchases were based on children’s’ needs, school environment, library budget as well as management situation (Wang 1937, 113). At the library, reading tables were divided into two types: tables for high-grades and tables for middle-graders; and so were the reading chairs. The reading tables for high-graders were
75 inches long, 36 inches wide and 26 inches high; the reading tables for middle-graders were 74 inches long, 30 inches wide and 23 inches high; the reading chairs for high-graders were round and measured 16 inches high; the reading chairs for low-graders were rectangular and measured 14 inches high (Wang 1937, 114). Although students in the same class might be the same age, their height could vary significantly. By including two sets of reading tables and chairs in the library, taller students in the middle grades could use higher tables and chairs designed for high-graders.

The author summarizes the children’s library standards for reading tables and chairs that were proposed by different scholars and adopted by libraries, as is shown in table 3.1. To review, the general reading table’s height at that time was between 21 inches for younger children and 30 inches for older children. The length was between 60 inches to 75 inches, and the width was either 30 inches or 36 inches, mostly rectangular shaped. Reading chairs’ height varied from 12 inches for younger readers to 18 inches for older readers, and their shape could be round, rectangle, or square.

**Table 3.1: Standards on children’s library reading tables and chairs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advocate /Adopter</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Reading table height (inch)</th>
<th>Reading table length (inch)</th>
<th>Reading table width (inch)</th>
<th>Reading chair height (inch)</th>
<th>Reading chair shape</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIU Guojun</td>
<td>5-8 years</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZENG Xianwen</td>
<td>8-10 years</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13 ¼</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>25 ¼</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14 ¼</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library of the FPSBNUF</td>
<td>High-graders</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle-graders</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Rectangle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WANG Bainian</td>
<td>High-graders</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Round Square Rectangle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle-graders</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Round Square Rectangle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.1 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZENG Xianwen</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>25 ¼</th>
<th>14 ¼</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young readers (around 5-8 years)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>60 or 66</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If round, diameter: 60 or 66</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 12 years</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>60 or 66</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If round, diameter: 60 or 66</td>
<td>14 or 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-16 years</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>60 or 66</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If round, diameter: 60 or 66</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU Jingshan</td>
<td>25 ¼</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>14 ¼</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the subject of tables and chairs for reading, discussions developed beyond their size. To name a few topics, the surface of a reading table should be smooth and clear (Wang 1936, 45). The edge and corner of the reading table should be slightly rounded to prevent accidents, and reading chairs should be heavy enough to prevent children from overturning them (Xu 1936, 79). In actual settings, reading tables should be arranged far enough (3 feet to 5 feet apart) to accommodate through traffic (Xu 1936, 79; Wang 1936, 48).

Providing a safe space for children to read was the priority among the limited services offered by libraries in the 1920s and 1930s. Library space was mainly organized to encourage reading, and library equipment was designed to facilitate reading. Therefore, issues pertaining to tables and chairs designed for reading attracted significant attention from library scholars and librarians. Attitudes towards children and childhood changed, and recognition for the status of children occurred in the 1930s. Suggestions, standards and practices for children’s reading tables and chairs at that time were based on a library’s daily administration, budget, and took into consideration the physical
appearance and social character of children. Reading tables and chairs were designed to
fit the needs of different age groups and were arranged to accommodate reading in the
library.

3.2.3 Bookshelves

At first, most children’s libraries adopted closed-stack systems; therefore, there
was not a need for customized children’s bookshelves. Later, as open-shelf systems
became more popular among children’s libraries, special bookshelves were made for
young readers. The simplest kind was an open, four-layer bookshelf, as in Lu’s blueprint
(Figure 3.1). This bookshelf was three-feet wide; it could be single depth (10 inches) or
double depth (18 inches), 40 inches high, and each shelf was 10 inches high (Lu 1935,
22). To shelve more books, the four-layer bookshelf might add three layers to become a
seven-layer bookshelf. The seven-layer bookshelf was still three-feet wide and 40 inches
high; however, each shelf was only 5 inches high so that books could only be stacked, as
shown in Figure 3.2 (Lu 1935, 22). The seven-layer bookshelf could be divided into a 42-
cell bookshelf, making it easy for children to fetch books and for librarians to reshelve
them, as Figure 3.3 demonstrates (Lu 1935, 23).

Figure 3.1: An open 4-layer bookshelf blueprint
A bookshelf could be made 5 feet high, 3 feet wide, 10 inches deep. It might be divided into 5 layers, each layer was 10 inches high (Wang 1936, 44). The dimensions of most children’s books during the Republic Era were duodecimo (width x height: 5 x 7 3/8 inches). Therefore, each shelf could hold 180 books and the 5-layer bookshelf could hold 900 books total (Wang 1936, 44). Each shelf should allocate one-fourth of its size to "free space," and for further collection expansion purposes. If the children’s library had a
collection of 1000 volumes, for example, four bookshelves of this kind were needed (Wang 1936, 44). To shelve some large-sized children’s books, the 5-layer bookshelf could be adjusted to a 3-layer or 4-layer bookshelf, and each shelf was 12 inches high (Xu 1936, 78). The Library of the FPSBNU used an open-access system since it opened, and the bookshelves were customized to accommodate children’s height. The bookshelves were made from elm trees. Each 4-layer bookshelf was 5 feet high, 3 feet wide, and 10 inches deep (Wang 1937, 113).

To summarize, the height of a bookshelf should be suited to the height of children. The ideal height would enable children to view and fetch books on the top shelf. Under these circumstances, most children’s bookshelves were between 3 ½ feet and 5 ½ feet. The width of the bookshelf was generally 3 feet. It could hold as many books as possible on one shelf, while not exceeding the weight limit of the shelf. A more flexible kind of bookshelf would have shelves with adjustable heights, which was highly recommended (Wang 1936; Xu 1936). Bookshelves were usually placed along the walls of libraries for reading convenience. For an open-access children’s library, the goal of designing and setting-up children’s bookshelves was to be both practical and economical.

3.2.4 Book Displays

Some materials, such as new-arrivals and picture books, were placed in a book display instead of on a bookshelf to encourage browsing. In children’s libraries, various book exhibits were used to display and store library collections. Generally, there were three kinds of book displays: vertical, horizontal and angled. The vertical display was a regular bookshelf that shelved books vertically, which was easy for readers to fetch
books; the horizontal display shelved books horizontally to save space; and the angled display could expose the full cover of children’s book to attract young readers (Wang 1936, 44). The optimal choice was the angled open shelf – the shelf was slightly angled to the back for easier viewing – as shown in Figure 3.4 (Lu 1935, 25). The book display was less than 5 feet high, 3 feet wide, and 14 inches deep with a 25° angle; each shelf was 5 inches high (Lu 1935, 25). For example, the Library of the FPSBNU used display similar to the one described here for the purpose of showing magazines. The magazine display’s dimensions were 48"H x 36"W x 15"D with 8 shelves, and each shelf could display 5 magazines (Wang 1937, 113-14). In practice, this kind of magazine display made it easy for children to browse and fetch books. However, an 8-shelf book display could result in too many children browsing at the same time. A 2-shelf book display with fewer books might be more convenient for children to browse as well as for librarians to manage (Li 1936, 6).

**Figure 3.4: The blueprint of a book display**

![Book Display Diagram]

To be more economical, libraries could recycle an old blackboard to make a display. A recycled book display could be made by adding three wooden panels to an old blackboard and nailing the blackboard into a bench, see Figure 3.5 (Lu 1935, 26).
In addition to showcasing books, magazines, and newspapers, a display could be used to present other library collection materials. For instance, the Beijing Central Park Reading Place specially made two wooden 5-level shelves to display and store toys, such as blocks, construction sets, and dolls for their young readers (Zhong 1982, 277-81). The shelves for toys were located at the east end of the reading room; however, a wooden fence surrounded the shelves to prevent damage (Zhong 1982, 277-81).

3.2.5 Other Furniture and Equipment

Reading tables and chairs, bookshelves and book displays were regarded as basic furniture to be found in a children’s reading room. Additionally, there was other furniture and equipment that might be found in children’s libraries. For example, the Capital Popular Library used wooden boards to catalogue children’s books and display them in the hallway (Jingshi 1919, 33-37). The Library of the FPSBNU added a card catalog cabinet, office desks, and office chairs to enhance the library furniture (Wang 1937, 113-14). Other furniture and equipment recommended included the following: circulation desks, bookcases for valuable books, old books and magazine bookcases, reference bookshelves, file cabinets, mirrors, and sinks (Lu 1935; Wang 1936; Li 1936). Such
furniture and equipment were not necessary at that time but could make the children’s library more comprehensive.

3.2.6 Decoration

Scholars generally agreed that a bright and welcoming children’s reading room could cultivate children’s reading interests and foster aesthetic appreciation. Light was the most important aspect of children’s reading room decoration. Considering the fact that most children visited libraries during the day, natural sunlight would be suitable for a children’s library. However, not all libraries in the Republic Era were built with enough windows, and some libraries were located in areas with more rainfall and less sunlight. To make up for insufficient sunlight and to brighten children’s reading rooms, ceilings and walls were generally painted with white or nearly white colors. Posters were the most common decoration element for a children’s reading room. The subjects depicted by posters varied from famous quotes to pictures of sages, to natural scenery. Plants, flowers, and miniature sculptures could also be found at some children’s libraries. Beautiful, convenient, tidy and clean were the major design pursuits when decorating a children’s library. As Liu concluded, children’s libraries should have “fresh air, bright light and elegant decoration to both meet children’s need and intrigue aesthetic perception” (Liu 1922, 1-7).

3.2.7 Arrangement

The question remains, how to arrange and display furniture and equipment to
make a children’s library inviting and functional? General components for functional areas in children’s reading rooms during the Republic Era included the following: reading area, reference area, and circulation area (Zeng 1929; Xu 1936). The reading area should have the best light in the room and generally be located in the center of the reading room; reading tables were set at least 3 feet apart from each other to make way for passage and to prevent congestion. Bookshelves, bookcases, and book displays were usually located along the walls surrounding the reading area. Reference and circulation desks were located near the entrance for the convenience of management. Figure 3.6 is the floor plan of a primary school library in 1935 (Lu 1935, 33). According to Lu, the shortcoming of this layout was that reading tables and chairs were insufficient. Lu further suggested an ideal floor plan for a children’s reading room, as shown in Figure 3.7 (Lu 1935, 34). In this floor plan (of a square children’s reading room), a catalog cabinet was located to the left of the entrance; the circulation desk was located facing the entrance; five reading tables were set in the center of the room, and bookshelves were set along the wall.

Figure 3.6: The floor plan of Wuxi Leikou Primary School Library
Wang Bainian, the librarian of the FPSBNU, was highly experienced in managing a children’s library and strongly advocated specialty-designs for children’s libraries. Figure 3.8 shows the arrangement of a children’s reading room that could seat 60 children, which was recommended by Wang and demonstrated the ideal children’s reading room in 1930s (Wang 1937, 47).
Figure 3.8: Wang’s floor plan of a single children’s reading room

Note: Each reading table can seat 10 students.

1. Entrance
2. Card catalog cabinet
3. General reference bookshelf
4. Office desks
5. Office chairs
6. New-arrivals bookshelf
7. Staff’s reference bookshelf
According to Wang’s floor plan, the reading room was a 728 square foot single room (Wang 1937, 47-48). It was 28 feet in length and 26 feet in width (Wang 1937, 47-48). The card catalog cabinet was located near the entrance to facilitate young readers’ research. The staff’s desk was dual-functional as an office desk as well as a circulation desk; thus, it was located near the entrance as well as to the card catalog cabinet. Nine bookshelves were located at the east end of the room. Each bookshelf was 3 feet deep and could hold a total of 500 children’s books (Wang 1937, 47-48). All together, nine bookshelves could hold 4,500 books, which was greater than the total number of children’s literature published at that time. Another one or two customized bookshelves were used to shelve children’s collected works. Popular materials, like daily newspaper displays, new magazine displays, and new-arrival displays were all located near the entrance to facilitate reading. Moreover, reading tables were located in the center of the reading room for more sunlight and for the convenience of collecting books. Reading tables for high-graders and middle-graders were located in separate rows, and each table was three feet apart from the next (Wang 1937, 47-48).
The above discussions on children’s library furniture, equipment, decorations, and arrangements may be evident, to some extent, by the children’s reading room at the First Municipal Library of Beiping, as shown in Figure 3.9 and 3.10 (Front 1936).

**Figure 3.9:** The First Municipal Library of Beiping, Beiping: children’s reading room circulation desk, 1936

![Figure 3.9: The First Municipal Library of Beiping, Beiping: children’s reading room circulation desk, 1936](Image)

**Figure 3.10:** The First Municipal Library of Beiping, Beiping: children’s reading room, 1936

![Figure 3.10: The First Municipal Library of Beiping, Beiping: children’s reading room, 1936](Image)
3.2.8 Conclusion

The development of children’s library space related to broader social, economic, political, and cultural developments; it was also influenced by society’s beliefs (Black and Rankin 2009, 23). During the Republic Era, children’s space in the 1910s was allocated from adult space and did not involve elements that specifically addressed children’s distinct needs. In the 1920s, library scholars and librarians introduced the idea of providing a safe and inviting space for children’s reading and began to discuss the issues of a children’s library – building, space, and equipment design. In the 1930s, society’s attitude towards children and child welfare changed along with an increased library budget and an increased number of children’s reading materials published. The development of children’s library space reflected such changes as more libraries paid attention to the allocation and design of children’s space as well as the employment of specially-designed library equipment.

An ideal children’s library would include a spacious room, specially-designed equipment, maintain a functional arrangement, delicate decoration, bright sunlight, fresh air, and beautiful surroundings (Zeng 1929; Lu 1935; Wang 1936). The planning and design of children’s libraries in the Republic Era took children’s needs, including their physical and psychological development into full consideration. Library furniture and equipment were designed from the viewpoint of children and were arranged for their convenience. From idea to practice, from blueprint to implementation, children’s libraries in the Republic Era strived to be functional, inviting, inspiring, and safe learning spaces.
3.3 Children’s Literature

Unlike the development of American children’s libraries in that children’s literature and specialized children’s collection were the “first conditions for youth services librarianship” (Jenkins 2000, 109), indigenous Chinese children’s literature emerged after the advent of children’s reading rooms in China. As discussed before, Confucian classic texts, fables, folk stories, and translations of Western children’s literature were the major sources of children’s reading before the emergence of native Chinese works. Additionally, several short-lived children’s magazines and newspapers served as early reading material for children before the advent of indigenous Chinese children’s literature.

The *Xiao Hai Yue Bao* (*Child’s Paper*), supported by the New York-based Presbyterian church, and edited by missionary John Marshall Willoughby Farnham (1829-1917), published its first issue in Shanghai in 1875 (Guo and Wu 2010, 100). Known as the forerunner of Chinese children’s literature, this monthly magazine covered a wide variety of content, such as poems, stories, and biographies of famous people, science, and others (Wang 1942, 21-22). The illustrations in the magazine were remarkable. The western printing technology employed by Mr. Farnham made these illustrations fine and exquisite, welcoming to a large readership. The magazine set a precedent for using illustrations in the Chinese magazine publishing industry (Wang 1942, 22). Nevertheless, the magazine was discontinued in 1915.

One of the earliest Chinese-operated children’s magazines, *Qi Meng Hua Bao* (*Enlightenment Pictorial*), started publication in 1902 in Beijing (Jiang 1985, 191). This magazine was edited by PENG Yizhong (1864-1921), the famous Qing Dynasty patriotic
journalist and the editor of a series of popular newspapers at that time (Wang 2010, 82). The major purpose of this pictorial was to enlighten children; therefore, its columns mainly included ethics, history, geography, arithmetic, science, education, nature, and world news (Jiang 1985, 191-203). To attract children’s interest, the magazine adopted vivid illustrations and vernacular language. The magazine was widespread and employed fifty sales offices in over twenty Chinese cities (Peng 2000, 29). Unfortunately, the magazine survived only 22 months and was discontinued because of the publisher’s lack of resources (Wang 2010, 84-85).

In 1903, the first Chinese children’s newspaper, *Tong Zi Shi Jie (Children’s World)*, was published in Shanghai by the Ai Guo Xue She (Patriotic Society) (Jing 1998, 116-17).11 Aimed at enlightening children and disseminating civilization, this daily12 newspaper brought fresh news on revolution to children in a timely manner. It also published articles on history, geography, and science (Jing 1998, 116-17). Due to its revolutionary nature, after 32 issues, the newspaper was forced by the Qing Government to stop publishing (Fu 2006, 4-5).

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11The Patriotic Society (Ai Guo Xue She) was formed by the dropouts of Nanyang Public School to fight against autocracy and promote democracy and revolution. Many great scholars such as CAI Yuanpei, ZHANG Taiyan served as its president and instructors.
12The first 20 issues were published daily, the 21-30 issues were published bi-daily, and the last issues were published every ten days.
Another early Chinese-operated children’s magazine, *Er Tong Jiao Yu Hua* (*Children’s Education Pictorial*), was first published by the Commercial Press in 1908 (Liu 2010, 26). The monthly magazine mainly used colorful pictures to promote children’s moral, intellectual and physical education. Its contents were divided into 22 topics, such as Chinese, history, arithmetic, nature, science, craft, health, music, fables,
and news (Liu 2010, 27). The pictorial’s targeted readers were preschoolers as well as first and second graders. A book review by the *Educational Review* described it thusly, “children with one or two year’s school education could read the magazine without difficulty, even younger children who could not read could still understand the pictures with some guidance” (Wang 1942, 23). This vivid pictorial was purchased in large quantity by primary schools as well as libraries at that time.

**Figure 3.12: The cover of the first issue of *Er Tong Jiao Yu Hua*, 1908**


The early Chinese children’s magazines and newspapers emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries when traditional Chinese culture met Western culture, and the cultural and educational circles started to “inspire the people and enlighten the children.” Therefore, the early children’s reading materials were inevitable influenced by the western missionary publication, contemporary revolutionary idea and
the traditional enlightenment education. They served different purposes, such as spreading Christian doctrine, promoting revolution, or assisting school education. Although these periodicals were created especially for young children, and adopted illustrations and vernacular language to attract children’s interests, they were rigid and lacked literary value. Nonetheless, these early magazines and newspapers provided much-needed reading materials for children at that time.

In 1909, the first issue of the *Tong Hua (Fairy Tales)* series appeared in Shanghai. Edited by SUN Yuxiu and published by the Commercial Press, it was acknowledged as the precursor to extracurricular reading materials for Chinese children (NLC 2013). It was read by thousands of children. Over 70 published volumes of *Tong Hua*, edited by Sun, contained fairy tales adapted from western sources, such as *Arabian Nights*, *Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, and *Andersen’s Fairy Tales* (Xie 2010, 49). It also included Chinese traditional sources, such as *Shi Ji (Records of the Historian)*, *Kong Que Dong Nan Fei (The Peacock Flies Southeast)*, and *Mulan Ci (The Ballad of Mulan)* (Xie 2010, 49). The *Tong Hua* series was targeted at children from seven to ten years old. It was edited and adapted to suit their reading and comprehension levels. In the same period of time, the Commercial Press published another popular series, *Shao Nian Cong Shu (Junior Series)*, which was about the biography of famous people. In about 30 volumes, the series covered the biography of famous historical figures from abroad, such as Christopher Columbus and Otto von Bismarck, as well as domestic celebrities, such as WANG Yangming and ZHU Geliang (NLC 2013; Wang 1942, 27; Chen 1933, 77). The targeted readership for the *Shao Nian Cong Shu* was children ten years and older. However, the biography was written in literary Chinese and failed to attract children’s
interests. Simply put, the major sources for children’s reading materials during the first two decades of the twentieth century were either translated and edited from western children’s literature or adapted from Chinese traditional literature.

Indigenous modern children’s literature in China flourished after the May Fourth Movement in 1919. More publishing houses, such as Zhonghua Book Company, Beixin Book Company, and World Book Company began to edit and publish reading materials for children. Some of the large publishing houses designed a new post for a children’s literature editor. For instance, the Commercial Press trained three prestigious editors for children’s literature: SUN Yuxiu, MAO Dun and ZHENG Zhenduo. They were in charge of the editing work of some of the most popular children’s books and periodicals published at that time, and they created their own works for children, encouraging more authors to write for children (Fu 2006, 6; Li 2007, 10-11; Xie 2010, 49-50). These editors made a substantial contribution to the development of modern Chinese children’s literature. Meanwhile, many prominent writers of the Republic Era, such as LU Xun, YE Shengtao, ZHANG Tianyi, BING Xin and FENG Zikai became actively involved in writing native Chinese children’s literature. In 1923, YE Shengtao published a collection of fairy tales titled, *Dao Cao Ren (The Scarecrow)*, and it is credited as the first book of children’s literature that placed the image of the child in the “actual context of contemporary Chinese society” (Farquhar 1998, 93-96). BING Xin’s *Ji Xiao Du Zhe (Letters to Young Readers)* (1923-26) was another major publication in the category of China’s modern children’s literature. Her fiction – “softly tuned to keynotes of tenderness, love and nostalgia” – was regarded as the first work written specifically for and about children’s life in China (Farquhar 1998, 115-16).
The flourishing of children’s literature in the 1920s and 1930s was reflected by the introduction of native literature works created for children. It was also made evident by an increase in the quantity and variety of books published for children. In addition to novels, fairy tales and stories, other genres and types of children’s literature became available, such as arts, crafts, poems, science, and information books. One of the first children’s science book series, *Chang Shi Tan Hua (On General Knowledge)*, introduced new science and technology to children, such as the telescope, microscope, and steam train (Xie 2010, 49-50). It did so in an appealing way in nine volumes (Xie 2010, 49-50).

Later, most publishing houses published various kinds of children’s book series, often with numerous volumes. For instance, the Commercial Press published a 500-volume *Xiao Xue Sheng Wen Ku (Pupils Library)* in 1933, and a 200-volume *You Tong Wen Ku (Younger Children Library)* in 1934 (Wang 1942, 51). *Xiao Xue Sheng Wen Ku* was for primary school students’ reading, and *You Tong Wen Ku* was intended for preschoolers’ reading. These two series were consistent in style and complemented each other. Together they provided an entire package of encyclopedic information for children (Li 2007, 118; Wang 1942, 51). The Zhonghua Book Company published a 450-volume *Xiao Peng You Wen Ku (Little Friend Library)* in 1935. The series covered contents for children with entry, intermediate, or advanced reading levels (Wang 1942, 52).

Publishing book series in popular science reading, supplementary reading, and encyclopedic reading met children’s needs for different reading materials and provided sources for children’s libraries’ collections.

Children’s magazine and newspaper publications peaked in the 1930s, including
some of the most influential titles in the history of journalism. The Commercial Press launched two children’s magazines, *Er Tong Shi Jie (Children’s World)*, and *Er Tong Hua Bao (Children’s Pictorial)* in 1922 (Wang 1942, 23-24). *Er Tong Shi Jie* was the first Chinese periodical aimed at publishing children’s literature. Prominent writers for children, such as YE Shengtao, SHEN Yanbing, and ZHENG Zhenduo all published in the magazine (Fu 2006, 6). In the same year, the Zhonghua Book Company published *Xiao Peng You (Little Friend)* to compete with *Er Tong Shi Jie*. Both *Er Tong Shi Jie* and *Xiao Peng You* were the most popular children’s magazines in the Republic Era. Each boasted biweekly circulations of over 20,000 copies (Jones 2011, 120). Until 1937, over a dozen periodicals, such as *Xiao Peng You Hua Bao (Little Friend Pictorial)*, *Zhong Xue Sheng (Middle School Students)*, and *Er Tong Ri Bao (Children’s Daily News)* were available for young readers. The children’s periodicals published after the May Fourth Movement were different from the previous ones insofar as they adopted vernacular language, catered to children’s psychological development, emphasized the appreciation and literariness of the content, and survived for a substantial period of time (Fu 2006, 2-7; NLC 2013).

According to the statistics compiled by CHEN Duxing, a scholar and editor of the Republic Era, until September 1933, there were over 4,000 volumes of children’s books published in China. Literature accounted for the largest part of the publications, with over 50 percent. Other categories included social science, science, technology, and arts; these accounted for less than 50 percent, as shown in Table 3.2 (Chen 1933, 77-79).
Table 3.2: Statistics of children’s books published from 1909 to 1933

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<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanjing Bookstore</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhonghua Book Corporation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriental Literary Society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanjing Scouts Study Society</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guangxue Society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beiping Culture Society</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilization Book Company</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wenhua Company</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>245</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>154</strong></td>
<td><strong>475</strong></td>
<td><strong>188</strong></td>
<td><strong>406</strong></td>
<td><strong>276</strong></td>
<td><strong>131</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,369</strong></td>
<td><strong>87</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,377</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children’s libraries in China emerged in the 1910s and before the advent of indigenous Chinese children’s literature. Chinese youth services librarianship did not fully develop, however, until the late 1920s and 1930s. Also, at this time, the publication of children’s reading materials peaked. Elizabeth Nesbitt, a pioneer and leader of library service to youth, suggested it might not be an accident that the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century’s development of library services for children constituted the
“golden age in the writing of children’s literature” in America (Nesbitt 1954, 119). In China, the flourishing of Chinese children’s literature in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as the development of library work with children during the same period was not accidental, either.

### 3.4 Children’s Reading Interests

Along with new education revolution in the Republic Era came the idea of promoting students’ independence in learning and encouraging children to read as much as possible. Reading became a way for assisting with classroom education and for promoting recreation. Such endeavors would help improve with reading comprehension and writing abilities as well as encourage cognitive development. As children were exposed to a large collection of reading materials besides textbooks, educators and librarians began to investigate and analyze children’s reading habits and interests.

Researchers often employed three different ways of investigating children’s reading habits and interests at that time. The first one mainly used a quantitative method to look at children’s libraries’ circulation statistics. The second way employed qualitative and quantitative methods by sending questionnaires about children’s favorites books and analyzing the results. The third way relied on observation and maintaining a log of records. XU Xilin, a researcher at the SUN YAT-SEN University Education Research Institute, summarized the characteristics of each method as follows. The circulation statistics method was biased because library borrowed books only accounted for a portion of children’s reading and borrowed books did not equal children’s favorite books (Xu 1930, 25). The survey method was also biased because children would not answer
honestly if their favorite books were improper and they might not remember every title of their favorite ones (Xu 1930, 25). The observation method would be more accurate but too time-consuming (Xu 1930, 25).

Xu employed the survey method for his own research and conducted the largest scale survey of children’s reading interest in the Republic Era from October 1929 to June 1930 (Xu 1930, 20-53; Xu 1930, 44-55). To weaken the bias of the survey method, he adopted an anonymous method in the hope that children would be more truthful in their questionnaire responses if kept anonymous. This nine-month survey involved nineteen public schools and private schools in urban and rural Guangzhou city (Xu 1930, 20-24). The survey sent around 16,000 questionnaires and received over 5,400 responses, with an over 30% response ratio (Xu 1930, 20-24). After initial screening, 3,027 of the 5,400 responses were used as the data set for further analysis (Xu 1930, 20-24).13 Table 3.3 is the profile of the respondents. The survey aimed at understanding children’s reading interests and habits as applied to books, magazines, and newspapers.

Table 3.3: Profile of the survey respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3,027</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To study children’s book-reading interests, Xu asked students to list their favorite book titles and tried to find the trend in children’s reading interests from those titles (Xu 1930, 24-39).16 His findings on children’s book-reading interests as related to age and

13See Appendix 1: Questionnaire of Children’s Reading Interests.
14Xu used junior high school grade 1, grade 2, and grade 3 in the original table, which were equal to grade 7, grade 8, grade 9.
15Xu used senior high school grade 1, grade 2, and grade 3 in the original table, which were equal to grade 10, grade 11, grade 12.
gender was summarized and complied as a list by HUANG Jie, the librarian of the National Children’s Library of China, as shown in Table 3.4 (Huang 2013, 51).

Table 3.4: Children’s book reading interests as related to age and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Boy</th>
<th>Girl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>Stories about animals and nature, myths</td>
<td>Stories about animals and nature, myths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Fictions, fairy tales full of imagination</td>
<td>Fairy tales, stories about girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Stories about daily life and familiar things</td>
<td>Stories about daily life and nature, fairy tales, biography, historical stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Stories about daily life, crafts</td>
<td>Stories about daily life, family and school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Stories about war and adventure, biography and legends</td>
<td>Daily life, adventure, travel, increased interest in romance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Adventure, war, and detective stories</td>
<td>Stories about family and school life, girl-related stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Daily life, adventure, mechanics and science, moral proverbs</td>
<td>Romance and daily life, poems, novels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Daily life, war, travel, celebrity biography, legends.</td>
<td>Daily life, romance, adventure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Reading interest became fixed. Politics, career</td>
<td>Reading interest became fixed. Poems, novels and biography</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It may be surmised from the table that there was some overlap in different age’s reading interests. The research results also indicated that the older the children, the more diverse their reading interests became, and the more books they were able to list as their favorites (Xu 1930, 24-36). Further, Xu concluded that children’s book-reading interests and habits in China were comparable to those of American children. As presented in the study of Gray and Munroe, the following three aspects were identified:

1. It is the first of all, primary school students in the United States and in China both preferred

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16Xu compared his research results with Gray and Munroe’s research results. In 1929, William S. Gray and Ruth Munroe summarized the major results of reader studies between 1900 and 1925 in the United States; these results were delineated by age, sex, occupation, and education. See William S. Gray and Ruth Munroe: The Reading Interests and Habits of Adults, a Preliminary Report. New York, Macmillan Co., 1929.
fiction to other books; secondly, children of the same grades’ reading interests were not the same; thirdly, junior high school was crucial in shaping children’s reading habits (Xu 1930, 24-36). The difference was that American children’s reading abilities developed greatly in the late years of primary school while children in China did not show any improvement in that period (Xu 1930, 24-36).

As to the relationship between gender and children’s book reading interests and habits, according to his survey results, girls in almost all grades listed more books as their favorites than boys, which might indicate that girls read more books than boys (Xu 1930, 36-39). The difference between boys and girls’ reading interests was also obvious: primary school boys preferred books, such as legends, chivalry, and detective novels. In contrast, primary school girls liked to read books about family life and romance (Xu 1930, 36-39). High school boys’ reading interests covered historical, social, and reference books; however, high school girls’ favorites were novels and poems (Xu 1930, 36-39). These findings on the relationship between gender and reading interests was allegedly similar to Gray and Munroe’s results (Xu 1930, 36-39).

As for book reading motivation, the study listed seven reasons and asked children to identify the reasons for reading certain books (Xu 1930, 37-38). Students responded as follows: interesting content was the top reading motivation for all graders, accounting for more than twenty percent (Xu 1930, 37-38). Coming in second was enjoyable articles and an effort to increase knowledge (Xu 1930, 37-38). Notably, teacher-assigned reading was not common among students’ choices of books (Xu 1930, 37-38). The responses were consistent with the results from Gray and Munroe’s study (Xu 1930, 37-38).
The primary and middle school curriculum standards at that time stipulated that primary school graduates should be capable of reading children’s magazines; therefore, Xu also investigated children’s magazine-reading interests. Students named 48 different magazines among their favorites (Xu 1930, 39-45). Xu analyzed the top seven magazines’ popularity among different graders, as shown in Figure 3.13 (Xu 1930, 40). As children grew older, their reading interests shifted from childish magazines, such as *Xiao Peng You* (*Little Friend*) and *Er Tong Shi Jie* (*Children’s World*) to adult magazines, such as *Dong Fang Za Zhi* (*Oriental*) and *Fu Nv Za Zhi* (*Women*) (Xu 1930, 39-45).

**Figure 3.13: Popularity of magazines among students**

![Graph showing popularity of magazines among students](image-url)
The relationship among children’s magazine-reading habits, interests, and age were much like children’s book-reading habits and interests. The older children became, the more they read, and the more diverse their reading interests became (Xu 1930, 39-45). Gender differences also influenced children’s magazine-reading interests, though not as obviously as book-reading interests. The fact that boys might read magazines as often as girls was remarkable as boys could name the same amount of favorite magazines as girls (Xu 1930, 39-45). As the publication of magazines in China had not reached a steady period and most of the magazines surfaced in the past three to four years, the study of children’s magazine reading habits and interests could use further research (Xu 1930, 39-45).

At the time of research, newspapers became part of people’s everyday lives. Primary school curriculum standards at that time stipulated that primary school graduates should be able to read popularly published newspapers. Therefore, Xu also investigated children’s newspaper-reading habits. From the survey results, it could be decided that the general trend of children’s newspaper-reading habits was that the older children became, the more likely they would be to read newspapers (Xu 1930, 44-53). On average, around 40% of primary school students read newspapers, and less than 20% of them were in the habit of reading newspapers every day (Xu 1930, 47-49). Around 80% of middle school students read newspapers, and less than 60% of them were in the habit of reading newspapers every day (Xu 1930, 47-49). However, when compared to American children’s newspaper-reading habits, the result was not equal. According to Xu’s comparison, in Gray and Munroe’s research, over 90% of American children read

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17In the case of book reading, girls identified more book titles than boys.
newspapers by the time they were in third grade, and over 90% of children developed the habit of reading newspapers every day by grade 5 (Xu 1930, 49).

Moreover, gender difference as regards children’s newspaper-reading habits was marked. On average, boys spent over fifty minutes reading newspapers every day, and girls spent around forty minutes (Xu 1930, 49-53). The fact that the percentage of girls in the habit of reading newspapers was far less than boys, and that girls of all ages spent less time reading newspapers than boys, indicated that girls were less interested in reading newspapers than boys (Xu 1930, 49-53). Girls’ unwilling to reading newspapers further lowered the percentage of children that had newspaper-reading habits in total (Xu 1930, 49-53). The relatively slow development of children’s newspaper-reading habits was a large concern for researchers.

As for children’s newspaper-reading interests, Xu divided newspaper articles into fourteen parts and asked children about their favorites (Xu 1930, 44-48). In general, primary school children liked to read local, provincial, and national news, junior high students’ reading interests expanded to education news; senior high students began to read international news and paid less attention to sports news and literature. Girls preferred literature to news while boys liked to read all kinds of news (Xu 1930, 44-48). Children’s newspaper-reading preferences demonstrated that newspapers met children’s interest in reading to stay updated on the news.

As the first and largest survey of children’s reading in the Republic Era, this survey laid an objective foundation for the further study of children’s reading interests and habits. Based on the analysis of available children’s literature and children’s reading interests, this study offered valid suggestions for children’s book and periodical

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18 See Appendix 1.
publication, provided guidelines for classroom teaching and library reading guidance, and argued for the necessity of children’s libraries with appropriate reading materials.

This survey of children’s reading interests and habits was based on Guangzhou city only. Although the survey result could not represent the national level, it still reflected the general situation of children’s reading interests and habits in the Republic Era to some extent. As Guangzhou was relatively more developed than other parts of the nation in cultural and educational development. Students’ performance was also above national level. Therefore, if the situation of children’s reading in Guangzhou was not satisfactory, the nationwide situation was inevitably worse, given less resources.

Jiang and Zhang employed the observation method to study children’s leisure reading in 1930 (Jiang and Zhang 1930, 31-40). To understand children’s real reading interests, they observed the Central University Laboratory School’s fifth and sixth graders’ reading behaviors in the school library for ten days (Jiang and Zhang 1930, 31-40). The school library had a collection of over 300 volumes, and the researchers classified the collection into thirteen categories (Jiang and Zhang 1930, 32-34). They listed the titles of each category as follows: fairy tales: 17; folklore: 5; stories: 89; chivalry novels: 26; detective novels: 8; popular novels: 14; modern novels: 53; poetry: 17; drama: 21; biography: 6; miscellany: 18; newspapers: 3; magazines: 9 (Jiang and Zhang 1930, 32-34). During each observation session, each student’s checked-out book titles, and the corresponding time, were recorded (Jiang and Zhang 1930, 35-38). At the end of this ten-day observation, twelve observation session sheets were recorded (Jiang and Zhang 1930, 35-38). Based on the observation log, sixty-eight different book titles
were checked-out by students, and the students’ reading preferences were presented as
the following table shows (Jiang and Zhang 1930, 39).

**Table 3.5: Central University Laboratory School students’ reading interests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chivalry Novels</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Novels</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Novels</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairy Tales</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detective Novels</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellany</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folklores</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>68</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several trends of children’s reading interests may be drawn from the observation results. Children’s favorite book categories included chivalry novels, stories, and popular novels (Jiang and Zhang 1930, 39-40). They also preferred magazines and other kinds of novels (Jiang and Zhang 1930, 39-40). Their least favorite materials were biography, poetry, and folklore (Jiang and Zhang 1930, 39-40). The study concluded that this trend of children’s reading interests matched children’s psychological development (Jiang and Zhang 1930, 39-40).

The study was innovative for employing the observation method; however, it was not without flaw. The sample was around 100 students from one primary school, and the children observed were limited to grade five and grade six students. Although the sample was not representative enough, and the experiment itself had shortcomings, the observation directly reflected children’s reading interests in real settings. The research
connected observation findings to children’s developmental characteristics and demonstrated that children preferred books from which they could find resonance. Thus, the research provided basic guidelines for creating children’s literature that catered to their particular psychological characteristics and reading interests.

In 1935, Wang offered free voluntary reading to study children’s reading practices in the Dahuayuan Experimental School in Kaifeng, Henan Province (Wang 1935, 1-24). He conducted a fourteen-week free voluntary reading experiment to observe seventeen middle graders’ reading performance (Wang 1935, 1-24). Sixty-eight different books were provided for students’ free voluntary reading (Wang 1935, 2-4). These reading materials were divided into four categories: eighteen repetitive stories; twenty-five stories; thirteen social science books; and twelve nature science books; and each book had three copies (Wang 1935, 2-4). Within fourteen weeks, the average students read around thirty books, counted over 40,000 words, and the top student read forty books, and counted 76,263 words in the same period (Wang 1935, 8).

Some students’ reading speed increased from reading one book in week one to reading five books in week fourteen (Wang 1935, 8). Wang analyzed that for the first few weeks, students’ reading speed was slow because their vocabulary was limited, and they had difficulty with spelling and reading comprehension (Wang 1935, 13-14). As the free voluntary reading sessions continued, and the more students read, the more fluent they became with using dictionaries (Wang 1935, 13-14). Their abilities in reading
comprehension developed, and they read faster than before (Wang 1935, 13-14).

Therefore, the general trend of Figure 3.14 was almost a linear growth (Wang 1935, 12).\(^1\)

**Figure 3.14: Volumes of books read in fourteen weeks**

![Graph showing volumes of books read over fourteen weeks.]

As for reading interests, Wang summarized that students read more repetitive stories than other books because those stories had fewer new words, were easy to understand, and suited children’s reading level (Wang 1935, 14-18). Students also preferred stories because of the interesting content of stories (Wang 1935, 14-18). As for particular titles, Wang further analyzed that if the book’s depth and interest suited the average children’s level, or if the book was recommended by peers or promoted by teachers, most students would read it (Wang 1935, 14-18). Wang also found that students seldom read ten particular books, including titles such as *Robinson Crusoe*, *the Little Match Girl*, and *Cheng Xiang (Weighing the Elephant)* (Wang 1935, 14-18). The only

\(^{1}\)In this figure, the sixth and seventh weeks’ reduction of books read was attributed to the absence of nearly half of the students because of sickness or other personal reasons. In the last two weeks of the semester, other school programs occupied some of the students’ time so that they read slightly less than before.
characteristic these books shared was that the teachers had replaced their original covers and bindings (Wang 1935, 14-18).

As the experiment continued, Wang employed various methods for testing students’ reading performances, such as reading notes, presentations in private and in public, reading tests and oral tests (Wang 1935, 1-24). After the fourteen-weeks free voluntary reading, all of the students showed improvement in reading interests and reading abilities (Wang 1935, 1-24). This study proved that free voluntary reading improved students’ vocabulary and spelling, developed their reading comprehension ability, and stimulated their reading interests. Furthermore, it revealed that children’s preference of books was influenced by the book’s content as well as the book level, book format, and binding. These research findings could be used to encourage children’s reading by matching them with appropriate books.

In 1936, Chi conducted a large-scale survey of children’s reading interests in Beijing (Chi 1936, 46-86). He visited five schools in person and asked the children to finish a questionnaire\(^{20}\) in thirty minutes (Chi 1936, 49-50). The survey elicited 845 responses from students (third graders to sixth graders) (Chi 1936, 50). Over 1,780 book titles were listed by children as books they had read in their free time, of which 460 titles were listed by at least five children (Chi 1936, 50-51). Chi based his analysis on these 460 books and further divided these 460 titles into 31 categories, which included magazine, story, picture book, fairy tale, novel, classic, history, geography, nature, etc (Chi 1936, 51). According to his analysis, stories and fairy tales were children’s favorite

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\(^{20}\)The questionnaire included three open-ended questions: (1) List the books you have read in your free time. (2) What are your favorite top three books, and why do you like them? (3) What are your least favorite three books, and why don’t you like them?
top two categories, accounting for 16% and 18% of the 460 books, respectively (Chi 1936, 51).

As expected, children’s reading interests varied among different ages and genders. Boys’ favorites were legends, Kung fu and adventure stories, as well as history (Chi 1936, 55-57). Girls’ favorites were fictions of romance and family life (Chi 1936, 55-57). Children of the same grade tended to share some common reading interests – third graders’ favorites were picture books; fourth graders read less picture books and more fairy tales than the third graders; fifth graders read more novels and began to show interest in nonfiction; sixth graders’ in general read more books and preferred books with more words than books with more illustrations (Chi 1936, 57-59). Chi’s research finding was identical with the above study that children’s reading interests were influenced by their age, gender, and developmental stage. Thus, his suggestions for reading guidance were similar to the previous ones that children should be provided with books that match their reading interests. For instance, boys could be provided with more materials, such as on subjects including adventure, aviation, and history. Girls could be provided with more family and school-based stories.

Regarding the above research, several trends of children’s reading and children’s literature publication in the 1930s could be identified. All of these studies employed a quantitative research method and based analysis on research data. These were among the first to study children’s reading interests and habits by involving children as participants. Biased or not, the research results reflected the general situations for children’s reading in the Republic Era, to some extent. These studies’ accordant findings included that children’s reading interests and habits varied among different age and
gender groups. Moreover, their reading interests and habits were internally shaped by their psychological development and externally influenced by the availability, contents, formats, and reading levels of the reading materials. Further, their reading abilities improved as they read more materials.

These findings offered a solid foundation for further study on this issue as well as applying the results to library practices. Furthermore, these researches aimed at an extensive analysis of all the available children’s periodicals and books published at that time, and it charted children’s preferences towards these materials. For instance, both Xu and Chi found that information books were in great shortage at that time (Xu 1930; Chi 1936). Information books were occasionally mentioned by students as their favorite books, not because of the children’s lack of interest but in part because of their short supply (Xu 1930, 51). Some advice from the research results was made known to publishers and influenced children’s literature publishing. After Xu’s call for more information books, a series of information books that presented factual material in an appropriate and appealing way were published. Children welcomed these books. According to statistics on the publication of children’s books, until 1933, information books on social science, science, and technology accounted for around 19% of all the books published for children (Chen 1933, 77-79).

Additionally, the research results provided guidelines for library practices, such as collection building and reading guidance. Based on the research findings on the relationship between gender and reading interests, most children’s libraries expanded their collections to include fiction, such as adventure and family stories as well as nonfiction, such as children’s book series, historical and social books. Libraries also
provided reading guidance to meet different genders’ reading interests. For instance, the Tianjin Municipal First Popular Library asked children’s reading interests and needs first before suggesting books for their reading (Lin 1936, 13-16). From the analysis of children’s reading performance in these studies, leveled reading was suggested to stimulate children’s reading interests and encouraged children’s reading. For example, Xu designed a selected bibliography of leveled reading materials, which could be used as the minimum booklists for library collection-building as well as reference for leveled reading. Based on the findings of children’s reading interests from these studies and his own experience, LI Wenyi, the curator of the Beiping First Library, divided young readers into three groups and provided each group with different level of reading materials (Li 1936, 1-30).

To conclude, the results of the research on children’s reading habits and interests provided guidelines for children’s literature publishing, library collection strategy, as well as library services for children. Most research found that non-fiction reading materials were insufficient compared to fiction, and thus suggested that more books and magazines on science, nature, and social science should be published. Those materials could include more illustrations to appeal to children. The analysis of children’s reading interests established a foundation for library collection policy. Librarians began to select materials that met and stimulated children’s interests. The findings on the relationship among age, gender, and children’s reading interests also shaped library services to children to some extent. Simply put, children’s libraries placed greater emphasis on reader’s advisory and strived to provide quality reading guidance.
3.5 Library Collection

A growth in society’s understanding of the value of children’s reading and source materials coincided with an increased number of publications in the field of children’s literature. Educators and librarians realized that children’s reading materials could broaden their vision, inspire their thoughts, increase their knowledge, supplement their education, encourage their feelings, stimulate their reading interests, and cultivate an appreciation of literature (Wang 1933; Shang 1933; Sun 1936; Chi 1936). However, not all children’s reading materials that were published at that time were suitable for children’s reading. A substantial amount of superficial materials with heavy descriptions of sex, violence, crime, demons, absurdity, and vulgar language inundated the market. Therefore, it became crucial for libraries to provide appropriate materials for children’s reading and keep to lead them away from inappropriate materials. Academics and librarians started the discussion and practice of book selection and collection building.

It was generally understood in the Republic Era that children’s book selections should be based on children’s psychological characteristics. Different from adults’ complex psychology, the children’s young age and limited experience made it necessary to analyze their psychological characteristics (Sun 1936, 149). SUN Ziqiang, a professor in the Department of Chinese at Nanking University, summarized children’s characteristics as curious, imitative, motivational, aesthetic, induced, and creative (Sun 1936, 149). For instance, young readers tended to imitate the heroes from fiction, after reading *Journey to the West*, they all wanted to be the mighty Monkey King. Therefore, he suggested, libraries should follow the natural inclinations of young readers and to select books, such as the biography of a great person and patriotic novels to stimulate
children’s imitation (Sun 1936, 149). Likewise, libraries could induce children to believe in cause and effect and select books that fall into the categories of “pride comes before a fall” and “what goes around comes around” (Sun 1936, 149). In addition, children’s aesthetic characteristics determined that libraries should select books that were beautiful in writing as well as in illustration and book design (Sun 1936, 149).

ZHOU Zuoren was among the first to bring up the idea that children should be provided with literature that would meet and cultivate their age-appropriate interests. He argued that children’s book selection should be based on the combination of children’s psychological development stages and literature criticism criteria and recommended different age group be provided with different categories of children’s books (Zhou 1920, 1-7). According to him, preschoolers’ (3-6 years old) most developed feelings were sensation and they couldn’t tell the difference between reality and unreality, therefore, nursery rhyme, fables with interesting contents and fairy tales without sadness, suffering and cruelty were most suitable for them; children’s observation and memory had evolved during middle childhood (6-10 years old) and their imagination were gradually limited by real experiences, they were more attracted by poems with rhymes and meanings, fairy tales such as Hans Christian Andersen’s collection or some chapters from Journey to the West, stories about nature; young teens (10-12 years old) further developed their self consciousness and morals and were no longer interested in nursery rhyme and should be provided with historical legends abroad or domestic, realistic stories such as Robinson Crusoe and Don Quixote, fables with education purpose, and dramas (Zhou 1920, 1-7).

Based on children’s developmental phases, identified by Kirkpatrick, Liu
analyzed different age groups related to children’s characteristics and suggested relevant types of materials for libraries to choose (Liu 1922, 1-7). For instance, “pre-childhood” (before age 8) children used imagination to understand the world (Liu 1922, 5-6). Thus, tales and stories were most suitable for them (Liu 1922, 5-6). “Post-childhood” (age 8 to 12) readers began to understand the difference between imagination and reality and were interested in creative stories as well as biographies (Liu 1922, 5-6). “Pre-adolescence” (age 12 to 16) children’s psychological and physical changes were most obvious among the categories (Liu 1922, 5-6). Libraries could provide poems and romance novels to meet their emotional needs as well as moral and inspirational materials to cultivate their spirits (Liu 1922, 5-6).

Research findings on children’s reading interests related to age and gender in the 1930s supported the discussion of the 1920s. They provided some guidance for libraries to select appropriate reading materials for children, as discussed.

Librarians in the Republic Era were particularly attentive to children deprived of educational opportunities. Children’s libraries were not intended for school children only. The library was an educational institution for school graduates and others to pursue knowledge. According to Du, more than 90% of children could not continue their formal education beyond primary school, making libraries a key site for informal education (Du 1926, 1-15). He took the example of Andrew Carnegie and his connection with libraries to emphasize the importance of libraries for educating children. Children’s libraries should help students to develop the habit of library visits while enrolled in school; thus, even if children could not continue their education, they could still go to the library for auto didacticism (Du 1926, 6-10). Therefore, besides fiction and textbooks, libraries
should select books on the subject of various industries and jobs (Du 1926, 6-10). Zeng also suggested that libraries should select books that could help children in their daily lives, guide career choices, and empower them to be productive citizens (Zeng 1929, 255).

Children’s reading level was another guideline for selecting children’s books. For instance, the Capital Popular Library only selected books that primary school students could read (Jingshi 1919, 33-37). Any book beyond the primary school students’ reading level was excluded from the children’s collection (Jingshi 1919, 33-37). Also, the Xinhuijing Primary School examined its collection, marking any book above students’ reading level as a reference book, and compiling a catalogue of leveled books (Xinhui 1934, 33).

Since the 1920s, the issue of selecting children’s books was widely discussed in the fields of education, literature, and library science. Although the criteria for selecting children’s reading materials for libraries evolved over time, it generally consisted of two aspects: content and format.

Ethical and moral issues constituted the prevailing criteria for selecting children’s books. What children read at early ages would shape who they would become in the future. Therefore, it was agreed that children’s reading materials should have noble ethics to help children build morality. Du emphasized that every book in the children’s library should have an “ethical tone” – the book should be able to enhance children’s ethics (Du 1926, 6-10). He insisted that when selecting children’s books, children’s librarians should read and review every book to eliminate immoral ones. In other words, it was the quality of a children’s collection, rather than its material quantity, that mattered (Du 1926, 6-10).
Besides ethics and morality, the criteria for selecting children’s books in the 1920s included literary value, scientific value, practical value, and revolutionary spirit (Du 1926; Ye 1928; Chu 1929; Zeng 1929).

With the increase in the quantity and variety of books published for children in the 1930s, the criteria for selecting children’s books became more specific. Ye and Wang proposed that different criteria applied to different genres of children’s literature. For instance, nursery rhymes should be in vernacular language and with charming syllables and easy to understand sentences; poems should have natural syllables and harmonious rhymes, organized to suit children’s grammar level; jokes and fables should include lessons to enhance children’s intellectual development; riddles and scientific books should provoke children’s research interests and enhance their intellectual development (Ye 1934, 244-45; Wang 1933, 66-69). Moreover, fairy tales, myths, stories, and novels share the same criteria: anything that described children’s lives or had solid advice could be selected; anything that was too preposterous and ridiculous should not be selected (Ye 1934, 244-45; Wang 1933, 66-69). As dramas and scripts were mostly adapted from poems, stories, fairy tales or novels, the criteria for selecting poems, stories, fairy tales, and novels applied to dramas and scripts (Ye 1934, 244-45; Wang 1933, 66-69). Non-fiction that could train children’s memories, imaginations, and reasoning skills, such as history, geography, education, military, industry, science and diplomacy books could be selected (Ye 1934, 244-45; Wang 1933, 66-69). Childish pictures and posters that could excite children’s emotions could also be selected as part of the children’s collection (Ye 1934, 244-45; Wang 1933, 66-69).

In 1933, the Ministry of Education published guidelines on selecting children’s
reading materials as follows: “suit the country’s conditions, contain correct information and advanced thoughts, beautifully written and illustrated, suit children’s experiences, meet the society’s needs, inspire the national spirit and avoid outworn, violence, superstition, etc.” (Zhen 1933, 8) Following the Ministry of Education’s guidelines, various standards and guidelines appeared for selecting children’s reading materials. The following materials were included: WANG Bainian’s Er Tong Du Wu Biao Zhun (Standards of Children’s Reading Materials), CHI Shouyi’s Zen Yang Xuan Ze Er Tong Du Wu (How to Select Children’s Reading Materials), and SUN Ziqiang’s Er Tong Tu Shu Guan Tu Shu Xuan Ze Zhi Yan Jiu (Study on Book Selection in Children’s Libraries). These were also the most referenced and cited ones. Standards generally included specific guidelines, such as “be ethical and moral”; “use plain and easy to understand language”; “be artistic and empathic”; “have scientific and industrial spirits”; “be optimistic, passionate, creative and imaginative”; “be harmonious, sincere, vivid and meaningful” (Wang 1936; Chi 1936; Sun 1936). Some of these guidelines were identical to the criteria adopted by American professionals in their pioneer years. For instance, Carolin Hewins, an influential figure in children’s book recommendations, stated in her renowned Books for Boys and Girls list in 1897 that she chose the books that “broaden the horizon of children, cultivate their imagination and love of nature, and add to their stock of general knowledge” (Thomas 1982, 71). In summary, the general criteria for selecting children’s reading materials at the Republican Era were as follows: children’s reading materials should account for children’s physical and psychological development, be suitable for children’s reading level and experiences, appeal to children’s interests,
exhibit educational and literature value, cultivate moral, and be beautifully written and illustrated (Jin 1930; Li 1936; Wang 1936; Chi 1936; Sun 1936).

There were also guidelines for reading materials that were not satisfactory. In general, books that could motivate children to make progress and encourage the spirit of diligence, justice as well as bravery, and that had educational value were regarded as good books. In contrast, books that propagated crime, sex, and feudalism, lacked solid argument, weakened children’s morale, and jeopardize children’s physical and psychological development were regarded as bad books (Wang 1936, 52-58). For instance, after reading some low quality martial arts novels, five children from Shanghai planned to go to Sichuan for Taoist practice (Chi 1936, 53-54). Such books were widely rejected by children’s libraries because the influences of these martial arts and sensational novels on children could be detrimental. This trend against “martial arts” novels was analogous to the American youth services librarians’ against “sensationalism in children’s books” in the late nineteenth century (Fenwick 1976, 335). Therefore, libraries should avoid any materials that propagate crime, sex, superstition, sensationalism, violence, feudalism, etc. Specifically, scholars suggested guidelines for identifying bad materials, such as “impair morality and ethic”; “be too mysterious, delusive, supernatural, unreasonable and ferocious”; “be decadent, pessimistic, world-weary, or dispirited”; “have too coarse, vulgar, and unorganized contents” (Li 1937; Wang 1936; Chi 1936). Some of these guidelines were identical to Hewins’s early standard for rejecting books, such as those that might encourage “cruelty, rudeness or disrespect”, or were too unrealistic, and written in poor English (Thomas 1982, 59).

The format of children’s reading materials received equal attention as did the
content. Criteria for the format of children’s books in the 1920s were general. Issues such as illustration, font size, paper quality, binding, and cover design were identified. They were not discussed in detail, however (Du 1926; Ye 1928). It was not until the 1930s that specific criteria for formatting children’s reading materials became available. Scholars suggested standards for appropriate formats for children’s reading materials. For instance, “paper should be durable, white and non-glare”; “printing should be superior, elegant, clear, and neat”; “font size should be suitable for children’s age and won’t affect children’s vision”; “binding should be firm,” etc. (Ye 1934; Wang 1936; Sun 1936; Chi; 1936; Li 1937).

Based on the criteria applied to children’s literature, concerned institutions and individuals started to recommend bibliographies for children’s reading and children’s library collections. In 1928, Du first suggested a selected bibliography of children’s literature, which covered reference books, series, history and geography, science, and literature (Du 1928, 1-12). In 1929, drawing from his experience as a school librarian, CHU Zirun published a short booklist for first and second grade students’ reading and assigned a reading level to each book with the aim of an increased number of library adoptions (Chu 1929). Based on the survey of children’s reading interests, Xu recommended a bibliography of children’s books for children’s libraries. Considering the limited budget of most libraries, Xu listed a modest bibliography with approximately 200 titles (Xu 1930, 44-55). In 1933, the Ministry of Education published a bibliography of children’s books with approximately 700 titles and chose 360 titles for its selected list (Zhen 1933, 8). These bibliographies and booklists combined research findings with practical experience and took the situations of contemporary children’s libraries into
consideration. This approach provided libraries with much-needed guidance to select appropriate reading materials for children.

In practice, children’s library collections developed as the result of an increasing quantity of children’s literature and an evolution of selection criteria. From its inception, children’s libraries were only stocked with a handful of classics, such as *Three Character Classic* and *Hundred Family Surnames* and popular novels for adults, such as *Journey to the West* and *Three Kingdoms*. Gradually, textbooks and children’s periodicals served as the major materials found in early children’s libraries. When the Capital Popular Library opened its children’s reading room in 1914, the children’s collection included four categories: textbook, fairy tale, picture book, novel and magazine (Zhuang 1914, 18-20).

With the advent of native children’s literature and the publication of children’s books in various genres in the 1920s, children’s libraries expanded their collections to include more types of reading materials. For instance, in 1926, one children’s library in Suzhou had a collection of sixteen categories with over a thousand volumes covering materials such as novel, drama, story, fairy tale, language, science, picture book, and periodical (Wang 1926, 1-15). Further, children’s libraries in the 1930s continued to make selections on materials and expand their collections. For example, the Anhui Provincial Library had a collection of over 3,000 volumes of children’s materials and published a catalogue for children’s reference in 1932 (Anhui 1932, 1). The library designated its collection to three main classes, and each class was comprised of nine divisions, as shown in Table 3.6 (Anhui 1932, 2-5). The Hangzhou Children’s Library held over 1,500 titles of children’s materials, classified as general works, social sciences,
language, science, applied science, arts, literature and history, and geography. For some popular titles, the library provided more than ten copies for children’s reading (Hangzhou 1933).

Table 3.6: List of Anhui Provincial Library’s children’s collection classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 General</th>
<th>2 Literature</th>
<th>3 History and Geography</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Bibliography</td>
<td>2.1 Novels</td>
<td>3.1 Human history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Party principles</td>
<td>2.2 Stories and Legends</td>
<td>3.2 World history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Society</td>
<td>2.3 Fairy tales</td>
<td>3.3 Chinese history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 General knowledge and Health</td>
<td>2.4 Poems</td>
<td>3.4 Miscellany of history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Arithmetic and Nature</td>
<td>2.5 Jokes and Riddles</td>
<td>3.5 World geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Arts and Music</td>
<td>2.6 Drama</td>
<td>3.6 Foreign geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Scouts and Recreation</td>
<td>2.7 Letters</td>
<td>3.7 Chinese geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 Series</td>
<td>2.8 Picture books</td>
<td>3.8 Travel guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 Periodicals and Posters</td>
<td>2.9 Foreign literature</td>
<td>3.9 Biographies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on children’s physical and psychological development, children’s libraries in the Republic Era tried to select appropriate materials to meet and cultivate their reading interests. Librarians not only developed certain criteria with regard to content, type, and format for selecting children’s materials but also suggested bibliographies for children’s reading. With the growth of children’s materials published and the evolvement of selection criteria, children’s library collections expanded from a handful of textbooks and classics in the 1910s to hundreds or thousands of titles covering a wide variety of classes in the 1930s.

3.6 Youth Services and Programming

With the advent of children’s spaces and emergent reading materials, children’s
libraries began to advocate their services and to develop multiple programs for promoting reading and literacy.

3.6.1 Library Advocacy

To promote library services and to attract more children to the library, children’s libraries utilized advertisements, created inviting environments, and employed incentives across the country. Children’s libraries utilized all of the available media outlets at that time to promote library services. They regularly publicized library news in magazines, newspapers, and school bulletins, using flyers and posters to advocate library programs. Another outlet involved radio-broadcasting programs for advertising services. For print advertisements, children’s libraries were successful at using words that were easy to read and comprehend as well as funny and interesting illustrations to attract children’s interests. For instance, one particular children’s library designed a pyramid shaped flyer to attract children’s attention and invite them to the library (Huang 1930, 1-6).

Look
Come look
Come and look
Come here and look
There are many good books
You will be happy reading them
You will not feel tired and fatigued
The books in our library are so interesting
They will also help you to increase your knowledge
Please get away from your games and take some time
Come come come welcome to our library and have a seat

Some libraries also posted flyers on the library’s bulletin boards to promote new books. One of the flyers read: “Confucius wrote a letter to his father: ‘Shang da ren qiu yi ji hua san qian qi shi shi er xiao sheng, jiu zi jia zuo ren ke zhi li ye,’ do you understand the

21The original flyer was published in Chinese, the author translates it into English.
letter? If not, take a look at the Volume 17 Issue 9 of the Youth magazine, you’ll find out!” (Huang 1930, 1-6)

When children arrived at the library, an inviting environment encouraged them to stay and visit again. A bright and beautiful children’s reading room could encourage children’s reading interests. Most children’s libraries used posters to decorate their reading rooms and stimulate children’s reading interests. The subjects of posters varied from quotes by famous people, excerpts from books to natural scenery. For instance, Sun Yat-sen’s “Besides revolution, the other hobby of my life is reading” was frequently quoted and posted on library walls (Huang 1930, 1-6). Book-related models, miniature sculptures, craft materials, or experiment equipment could also be found on display at some children’s libraries.

Reading incentives were often employed by children’s libraries to facilitate reading. There were two kinds of reading incentives: one was based on children’s reading performance, and the other was based on competition. For children’s reading performance, a quantitative measurement was generally used to keep track of children’s library visits and the number of books or pages read. At the end of each week, or each month, libraries published a table listing children’s visits and reading logs with the hope that children would be stimulated by the table and would visit and read more. The Guangxi Provincial Popular Education Library, the Beiping First Library, the Yunnan Provincial Kunhua Popular Education Library, the Henan Provincial No.11 Primary School, and the Library of the FPSBNU all published this kind of table regularly. The other kind of reading incentive was competition. Children’s libraries in China organized various kinds of competitions to entice children to read. These competitions included
reading games, essay writing contests, literacy games, calligraphy competitions, and speech contests, among others. The libraries gave tangible rewards to participants at the end of the competitions. The rewards were prizes, such as books, pencils, or notebooks. These kinds of reading incentives met children’s competitive nature, stimulated their reading interests, and promoted library services.

3.6.2 Youth Service Programs

To invite children to the library, keep them occupied, and connect them with reading materials, a wide range of services and programs were designed and provided by children’s libraries since the 1920s. These services and programs included reading guidance, readers’ club, storytelling, summer reading, exhibits, themed competitions, and scientific experiments.

3.6.2.1 Reading Guidance

With an increase in the quantity of children’s reading materials, the emergence of a diversity of library collections, and the growth in the numbers of young readers at libraries, most children’s libraries during the Republic Era started to provide reading guidance for children. “Reading guidance” was a broadly used term that referred to any service that helped with children’s reading. Similar with the motivation for reading guidance in the early years of library services to children in America aimed “to bring the best books to the attention of children.” (Fenwick 1976, 344) The goal of reading guidance in the Republic Era was to stimulate children’s reading interests, match children with suitable books, guide children to make the best use of reading, and to evaluate children’s reading achievement.
Broadly speaking, stimulating children’s interests meant inviting children to the library, engaging their reading interests, and enticing them to read. Therefore, it could not be achieved by simply providing reading materials. Librarians needed to coordinate library collections and library programs to achieve this goal. There were various discussions and practices on how to attract children to the library and entice them to read. Such efforts involved advertisements, creating inviting environments, giving rewards, and organizing competitions. These kinds of simulations were part of library advocacy and promotion methods, as discussed before.

Based on research findings of children’s reading habits and practical experience, librarians gradually became aware of the different reading skills and interests among different children and strived to provide children with suitable books.

Chi suggested that acting in accordance with knowledge of children’s psychological features would stimulate their reading interests and guide their reading (Chi 1936, 9-18). For instance, to work with an awareness of children’s gregariousness, librarians could organize group meetings and discussions to help children to feel more comfortable in the library (Chi 1936, 11). Librarians could also address children’s competitive nature, and they could praise and reward young readers, incentivizing them to read more (Chi 1936, 11). Additionally, librarians could accommodate children’s instinct of imitation by providing dramas and plays for them to read and to perform (Chi 1936, 11). To meet children’s instinct for publication, librarians could encourage children to tell stories or to write book reviews (Chi 1936, 11). Additionally, to meet their instinct for creation, librarians could provide children with art and craft books and invite them to draw pictures or otherwise participate with craft activities (Chi 1936,11). To meet their
love of gaming, librarians could suggest books with game ideas or scientific experiments and inspire children to try them out (Chi 1936, 11). To meet their curiosity, librarians could ask certain questions and refer children to the books that had information to answer the questions posed (Chi 1936, 12). To meet their collecting hobbies, librarians could encourage children to excerpt poems, riddles, and short stories (Chi 1936, 12).

Approached from children’s psychological features, this kind of reading guidance would greatly stimulate children’s reading interests, facilitate them to read spontaneously, and empower them to choose their own reading materials.

Another method employed by children’s libraries was leveled reading. The Pingshan Primary School was among the first libraries to trial leveled reading. The school librarians first divided library collections into six tentative levels; each level represented a particular grade (Xinhui 1934, 33). Based on leveled reading materials, librarians designed specific written tests and asked students to finish those tests after reading the leveled materials (Xinhui 1934, 33). It was assumed that if over fifty percent of a grade’s students could pass the tests, then the level was assigned appropriately (Xinhui 1934, 33). The overall test results for all graders appeared to be satisfactory, which deemed the assigned levels to be acceptable (Xinhui 1934, 33). Therefore, the school library employed leveled reading to guide children’s reading and published a bibliography of leveled reading materials (Xinhui 1934, 33). Later, other children’s libraries also built their own bibliography of leveled reading materials or followed the bibliography published by the Ministry of Education.

Beyond stimulating reading interests and providing appropriate reading materials,
libraries also tried to help children make the best use of reading. Cai suggested four kinds of reading guidance that would help with children’s reading. Personal guidance: children’s libraries could adopt an open-shelf system, empowering children to read on their own; when children asked questions, librarians would address their questions in detail (Cai 1931, 4). Group guidance: a reading club was the most common way for group guidance. During a reading club meeting, questions could be discussed among the group and solved by the children. When questions arose, librarians could provide further guidance or suggest relevant reference books for the children to consult (Cai 1931, 4). Patrol guidance: instead of passively being approached by children for advice, librarians could patrol around the reading area and help children with possible questions (Cai 1931, 4). Booktalk guidance: to engage children’s reading interest, librarians could tell a story to the children that was excerpted from a certain book but then make a sudden stop (Cai 1931, 4-5). Children would be curious to know the end of the story and would be enticed to read the entire book. If adopted properly, these methods of working with children would guide children to make the best use of reading.

Specifically, there were discussions on how to guide children to read various materials. For instance, almost all children liked to read stories. To make the best use of story reading, librarians could further guide children to tell stories and create stories of their own (Zhu 1931, 45-52). This kind of guidance would nourish children’s story reading interests, develop their writing skills, and public speaking abilities.

To keep children updated with the latest news, librarians and teachers created various ways to encourage children to read newspapers. For instance, librarians marked important newspaper articles with bold signs to attract children’s reading interests
(Huang 1937, 5-8). They also provided newspaper summaries or briefings instead of original newspapers for children to read (Huang 1937, 5-8). Sometimes, the librarians retold newspaper articles to children, listing specific questions for children to solve first, and then asked children to read relevant newspapers (Huang 1937, 5-8). Additionally, they organized newspaper clubs for children to read, retell, and discuss newspaper articles (Huang 1937, 5-8). These kinds of methods simulated children’s newspaper reading interests and helped them to develop habits for reading newspapers.

To evaluate children’s reading progress, various kinds of evaluation methods, such as reading reflections, book reports, oral tests, written tests, and scientific experiments were employed by librarians across the country. For example, the Yunnan Provincial Kunhua Popular Education Library designed a questionnaire to evaluate children’s reading development (Luo 1934, 3-32). The questions included, “How many books have you read? Please list their names.” “Which books are most interesting?” “What’s your goal of reading?” (Luo 1934, 21-23) Chi used a book report to keep track of children’s reading progress. He designed the book report to include a book’s bibliographic information, book score,²² book level, most interesting page, most attractive illustration, children’s note, reaction, and questions (Chi 1936, 17-18). This kind of book report could be used to evaluate children’s reading progress and as a basis for leveled reading and reading interest studies (Chi 1936, 17-18).

3.6.2.2 Readers’ Clubs

To connect children with books, various reading programs were employed by

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²²Chi described the calculation method of the score of a book as: Score=words per line × lines per page × pages per book. It was actually the approximate number of the word count of the book.
libraries in the Republic Era. Among such programs, the readers’ club was the most popular and common. Librarians believed that readers’ club would function to occupy children’s spare time, facilitate education, provide reference, and guide children to read, improve their reading ability, develop their reading habits, and enhance their social skills. Therefore, all kinds of readers’ clubs were formed across the country. For instance, the Anqing Public Library attracted more than sixty members to its young readers’ club by 1931 (Anqing 1931, 17-18). The club met once every week for a given activity, such as group reading, group discussion, public lecture, debating, or essay writing (Anqing 1931, 17-18). Moreover, the Guangxi Provincial Popular Education Library formed the children’s reading club to cultivate children’s reading interests as well as develop children’s self-education habits (Liang 1938, 1-11). The ultimate goal for the reading club was to provide educational opportunities for those children who dropped out of school (Liang 1938, 1-11). Club members were required to read at the library for an hour every night (Liang 1938, 1-11). The club also held group meeting every week to review and discuss books (Liang 1938, 1-11). It also organized reading contests, such as storytelling, speech competition, and riddle guessing every month (Liang 1938, 1-11). The Tianjin Municipal First Popular Library kept track of children’s reading club members’ reading log and gave rewards to frequent readers (Tianjin 1936, 10). To stimulate children’s reading interests, the library assigned certain books for club members’ reading and held essay contest regularly (Tianjin 1936, 10). Essay topics were drawn from the assigned reading materials (Tianjin 1936, 10). Additionally, the Shanghai Public Library, the Tianjin Popular Education Library, and the Beiping First Library all had young readers’ clubs with active members and regular programs. As well as book reviews
and discussions, contests and rewards were the major incentives that readers’ club
employed to engage children’s reading interests.

Readers’ club became a formalized service for most children’s libraries. This was
evident by readers’ club membership cards, readers’ club regulations, and readers’ club
calendars. In addition to its effort to encourage children to read, the readers’ club also
aimed to facilitate children’s self-learning and to discipline their behavior within the
library. From the various approaches that children’s libraries took to guiding children’s
reading, it may be concluded that libraries aimed to connect children with appropriate
reading materials.

3.6.2.3 Storytelling and Story hours

Libraries began to adopt storytelling in the 1920s to stimulate children’s reading
interests and bring children to the libraries. To attract more children, libraries usually
held story hours during weekends and holidays. Although most of the time it was the
librarians who were responsible for reading and telling stories, schoolteachers and
storytellers could also convey stories in children’s libraries. Similar with the storytelling
practices in American libraries, librarians often chose “strong and beautiful tales”
(Hazeltine 1921, 42). Stories adapted from fairy tales and fables were the most common
topic at story hours in China, too. Other topics included biographies of famous people,
mechanical subjects, such as railways and electric wires, and adventure stories, among
others. Also, topics varied according to seasonal theme. For instance, stories about New
Years were told during a particular holiday season, and stories about Tomb-sweeping
Day were told during early April.

Zeng suggested that libraries hold different children’s story hours for different age
groups. For instance, there would be separate storytelling times for children at 3-5 years, 6-9 years, 10-12 years, and 13-16 years (Zeng 1929, 251-58). In this way, librarians could choose age appropriate stories to tell, and children would benefit more from this method. Some libraries also used slide shows to aid with storytelling and to attract children’s varied interests. This was different from the American practices at that time which emphasized the “telling” of stories to make children “see with the mind” (Fu 1927, 38; Hazeltine 1921, 41-42).

Storytelling was considered a bridge to connect children to the library. It helped to build a bond between librarians and children. Children often become attached to a particular librarian or library and have affection for the library in general. Story hours were especially crucial to preschoolers who often could not read. It also created a literacy environment for young readers, and storytelling cultivated the interests of future readers. For school children, storytelling was also effective because it could entice children to read the books that contained the stories told to them.

3.6.2.4 Summer Reading

Some libraries realized that summer vacation without formal schooling was too long. Thus, libraries began summer reading programs in the 1930s to motivate children to read during summer vacation. The typical summer reading program was similarly designed as the Tianjin Fifth Popular Library’s program. In 1934, the library provided a summer reading program to enhance children’s reading interests (Pan 1934, 11-12). During this one-month program, children went to the library to read everyday (Pan 1934, 11-12). The library logged each child’s reading time and the number of pages read as a way of measuring their reading achievements (Pan 1934, 11-12). At the end of the
summer, the library rewarded participants with small prizes (Pan 1934, 11-12). This kind of summer reading program stimulated children’s reading interests and encouraged them to read during the summer and while not in school.

To promote the library’s youth services, compensate for the lack of reading resources available to children during the summer, and guide children to read, the Yunnan Kunhua Popular Education Library also launched a large-scale summer reading program in 1934 (Luo 1934, 3-32). Over eight hundred children from thirty schools enrolled in the summer reading program within four days (Luo 1934, 7-8). Because of the limited capacity of the children’s reading room and the high volume of participants, the library separated the children into two groups and asked them to come to the library at different times (Luo 1934, 8-9). During the summer reading days, lower graders came to the library in the morning and higher graders came to the library in the afternoon (Luo 1934, 8-9). Each group spent three hours in the library per day (Luo 1934, 8-9). The three-hour program was comprised of two reading sessions with each session lasting for one hour (Luo 1934, 9-11). It also included a fifteen-minute break, and a forty-five minute speech or group discussion at the end of the session (Luo 1934, 9-11). Around five hundred children actively involved in this program came to the library to read for each of the twenty-five days (Luo 1934, 10). On the last day of the program, the library held a reading contest to evaluate the children’s reading progress and awarded achievers (Luo 1934, 21-25). At the end of the summer reading program, the library organized a children’s reading club to continue providing the opportunity for children to read (Luo 1934, 26-29). This summer reading program stimulated children’s reading interests and developed their reading abilities. It also helped librarians to identify potential problems in
programming and reading guidance, thus improving the quality of the library’s youth services.

In 1936, the FPSBNU initiated a special summer reading program (Wang 1936, 107-14). It was part of a summer camp located in a serene mountain on the outskirts of Beijing. The librarian brought thirty books on health, thirty historical and geographical books, and ten kinds of children’s magazines (Wang 1936, 108-09). This totaled fifty volumes at the summer camp. The librarian was aware that these children liked to read fiction the most, followed by historical and geographical books, and finally, newspapers and magazines (Wang 1936, 109). However, to encourage children to read more newspapers and magazines as well as information books, the librarian intentionally did not bring works of fiction to the camp (Wang 1936, 109). During the two-week summer camp, children read freely at any time of the day, and the librarian provided news broadcasting every morning and storytelling every night (Wang 1936, 107-14). The effect of this summer reading program was particularly effective for the following reasons: the natural environment and beautiful nature setting, the amount of time available to children for reading, and the on-site reading guidance of the librarian at all times. The summer reading program connected the reading theme with the summer camp, inspired children’s reading interests, improved their reading skills, and strengthened the relationship between librarians and children.
With schools closed and a lack of literacy resources for children at home, children’s libraries became the ideal place for children to read during summer vacation. Although libraries had not fully developed their summer reading programs (such as not having a theme for the program, suggested reading lists, or convenient reading times), the summer reading program proved, nevertheless, to benefit children by encouraging them to go to the library. It also inspired children’s reading interests and improved their reading skills. Despite its benefits the summer reading program was not a well-established aspect of youth services in the Republic Era.

3.6.2.5 Exhibits

Children’s libraries in the Republic Era often held exhibits on special occasions or on certain themes. On special occasions, such as national holidays, anniversaries, or Children’s Day, children’s libraries tended to organize exhibits to celebrate and to
promote library services. In 1932, to celebrate the first Children’s Day in China, libraries in Hangzhou city held various exhibits for young readers (Hangzhou 1932, 3-5). The Zhejiang Provincial Library displayed books on parenting and childrearing, held story hours several times throughout the day, and gave a special Children’s Day autograph book to children (Hangzhou 1932, 3-5). The Hangzhou Municipal Children’s Library organized an exhibit of children’s photographs and illustrations for stories (Hangzhou 1932, 3-5). The Zhejiang Provincial Popular Education Library held children’s book exhibits for ten days and treated children with candy (Hangzhou 1932, 3-5). These events attracted thousands of children to the libraries and promoted library services to children in Hangzhou city.

In the following year, the Zhejiang Provincial Library continued to celebrate Children’s Day and held an exhibit for children on 4 April 1933 (Zhejiang 1933, 12-14). The library decorated the entire branch for the event, displayed children’s new books and hundreds of illustrations, distributed pamphlets on library youth services to visitors, and published a special edition of the library newsletter on children’s reading (Zhejiang 1933, 12-14). More than two thousand children came to the library for the exhibit that day, which was an unprecedented number since the library’s opening (Zhejiang 1933, 12-14).

In 1934, the Guangdong Xinhui Pingshan Primary School launched a two-week new book exhibit (Pingshan 1934, 30-31). At that time, 228 volumes of new books were exhibited to promote children’s reading (Pingshan 1934, 30-31). The new books were divided into four categories for display purposes, including: books for high graders, books for middle graders, books for low graders, and arts and craft books (Pingshan 1934, 30-31). Before the exhibit, librarians lectured on how to take notes when reading; during
the exhibit, printed information on reading methods was provided, and each child was equipped with a prepared notebook (Pingshan 1934, 30-31). As a result, the school children’s reading reached a pinnacle in the exhibit week. This new books exhibit encouraged children to read at the library and helped train their reading habits.

In addition to exhibiting its existing collection, libraries also exhibited materials from other sources. For instance, in 1935, the Primary School of the Shanxi Provincial Normal School contacted the major publishers of children’s books and asked them to send children’s books for its library book exhibition (Shanxi 1935, 2-4). During the exhibition, each publisher was given a room to display their published children’s books (Shanxi 1935, 2-4). Publishers that took part of this exhibit included the Commercial Press, the Zhonghua Book Company, and the Jinxin Bookstore (Shanxi 1935, 2-4). The school library organized this exhibit to stimulate children’s reading interests. It also aimed to investigate the range of available children’s reading materials and to provide reading guidance.

In addition to holiday and anniversary celebrations, new book exhibits, other theme-based events, library exhibits included the following topics: health, science, and children’s calligraphy, among others. The collections displayed included books as well as illustrations, equipment, and models.

Children’s libraries in the Republic Era held exhibits on various occasions, adopted various themes, and displayed various items. These exhibits highlighted materials from library collections, cultivated children’s interest in library reading, and promoted youth services ultimately. Thus, the library exhibit became one of the most popular programs for children’s libraries and was welcomed by young readers.
3.6.2.6 Competitions

Children’s libraries in China enjoyed the tradition of holding competitions to stimulate children’s reading interests. Librarians and educators at that time believed that children had the instinct of competitiveness. Therefore, it was understood that competition would appeal to children’s instinct and encourage them to visit the library more often and to read more.

Reading competition was the most common competition that libraries organized. Most libraries kept a log of children’s reading activities, such as how many visits or how many books each child read per month. For instance, the Library of the FPSBNU and the Dahuayuan Experimental School kept track of each student’s reading activity, charting the volumes of books that they read, and publishing the results, periodically (Wang 1937; Wang 1935). The Tianjin Municipal First Popular Library initiated its frequent reader program, published the names of children with the most visits monthly in the library magazine, and awarded those that visited the library over thirty times and over fifty times with small rewards (Lin 1936, 13-16). The Beiping First Library kept track of children’s reading by recording titles and the number of pages read (Li 1936, 1-30). It organized reading contests every month and published the contest results annually (Li 1936, 1-30).

Other kinds of competitions took place in children’s libraries across the country. These included essay contest, speech competition, calligraphy competition, and modeling contest. The Tianjin Municipal First Popular Library held essay contests regularly in an effort to engage children’s reading interests as well as to help improve their reading and writing skills (Tianjin 1936, 10). For the contest, librarians would assign ten books for children’s reading, and the essay topic would be drawn from these books; children would
be given three weeks to read the books and one week to write the essay (Tianjin 1936, 10). The essay topics included fresh air and health; who invented the train, telegraph, and airplane; origins of Buddhism; species of sheep, among others (Lin 1936, 13). This essay contest proved to be an effective way to stimulate children’s reading. As a matter of fact, during the contest season, every day between 100 and 200 children went to the library to read (Lin 1936, 13).

To encourage children’s reading interest in newspapers and to keep them updated with current events, the Hangzhou Children’s Library held a “current events” quiz in 1935. The library had a newspaper collection of various national and local newspapers as well as children’s newspapers, and the quiz was based on news from these sources (Hangzhou 1935, 2-3). Around 80 children participated in the quiz, and those with high scores were given awards by the library (Hangzhou 1935, 2-3). In this way, the library managed to entice children to read newspapers.

Since the emergence of youth services in China, competition was employed by libraries to simulate children’s reading interests. Later, this service was widely adopted by libraries across the country with the hope of bringing children to the library, getting them involved in library programs, and encouraging them to read. By the end of the 1930s, it became an indispensable part of youth programs for most libraries.

With the purpose of promoting reading, youth services evolved over time and were associated with library programs – library advocacy, readers’ club, storytelling, summer reading, exhibit, and competition. Children’s libraries developed a variety of programs suited to children’s mental and psychological development and provided services from a child-oriented perspective. In its pioneer era, the practices of American
children’s libraries tried to reach individuals via groups by providing group service, such as reading guidance, book talks and storytelling (Nesbitt 1954, 119-20). Chinese children’s libraries also addressed young readers as a group and developed group methods to stimulate children’s reading interests and to provide reading materials collectively instead of individually. Such libraries did not allocate the time or resources (service technique) to accommodate the individualized moral, intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic reading needs for every child. Nonetheless, these programs strengthened the connection between children and libraries, promoted literacy, and ultimately facilitated reading. Some programs, like the readers’ club became formalized as a regular library service, and some programs, such as exhibits and competitions, were refined to better stimulate children’s interests. This section provides evidence that youth services programs became a viable part of public library services in the Republic Era.

3.7 Youth Services Librarians

“Children’s rooms, but as yet no children’s librarians worthy of the name.”

In most modern public libraries, children’s rooms were established, children’s books were made available, and youth services were provided. However, librarians for the children were absent. In the Republic Era, qualified children’s librarians were difficult to find despite advocacy from the progressive leaders of the modern library movement and discussions intended to raise awareness for youth services and librarianship in professional literature.
3.7.1 Librarians

Progressive Leaders of the Modern Library Movement

LIU Guojun (1898-1980) – Kwoh-Chuin Liu in English – was one of the greatest scholars in twentieth-century Chinese library history. Also, he was among the first to advocate for children’s libraries in China. Upon graduation from the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Nanking\(^2\) in 1920, he worked at the university’s library before moving to the United States for graduate study. He studied philosophy and library science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and finished his master thesis, *John Dewey’s Logical Theory*, in 1923, and Ph.D. dissertation, *The Problem of Meaning in Contemporary American and British Philosophy*, in 1925 in the same school. After returning to China, he worked as the university’s librarian at the University of Nanking and professor of the College of Liberal Arts where he taught courses on library science. Later, he moved to Beijing and worked as the editor-in-chief of *Library Science Quarterly*, professor and dean of the Department of Library Science of Peking University. In 1979, he was elected as the honorary president of the Library Society of China. His most prominent publication was *A System of Book Classification for Chinese Libraries* in 1929, and this classification system is still used today in many libraries in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau.

The national library classification scheme in China today – Chinese Library Classification (CLC) – is also based on his system. In addition to his innovative classification methods, he was also actively involved in introducing the idea and philosophy of modern public libraries to Chinese library world and published many

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\(^2\)University of Nanking (Jin Ling Da Xue) was a private university sponsored by American churches in 1888 and was registered with the New York State Education Department. Until 1928, its presidents were all Americans and most of its courses were taught in English.
renowned articles such as “The Nature of Modern Library” and “The Spirit of American Public Library” (Zhang 1983, 1-10). Through his interest in education, knowledge of library science, and experience of studying in the United States, he proposed the idea of “saving the nation by education” and focused on one specific area of education: the children’s library as an educational institution. The single and most valuable work that he published on the children’s library was in 1922, titled “Children’s Library and Children’s Literature.” In this work, he introduced the theory of child psychology to library science, justified the importance of children’s libraries, and proposed three elements of children’s libraries – facilities, librarians, and books – and analyzed them systematically (Liu 1922, 1-7). From the “discovery of children” to children’s education, from children’s education to children’s libraries, Liu became one of the leading advocacy figures for children’s libraries.

Another great library scholar who shared a similar fame to LIU Guojun was DU Dingyou (1898-1967), as he was so-called in “North LIU and South DU.” In English, he was known as Ding U Doo. He was one of the founders of modern Chinese librarianship and leaders of the Modern Library Movement in China. In 1918, Du was sent by the Shanghai Industrial College24 to study library science in the University of the Philippines.25 During his time in the Philippines, he majored in literature and library science, minored in education, and worked as an assistant at the university library. In 1920, he finished three theses: “Chinese Books and Libraries” for library science, “Chinese Education in the Philippines” for education, and “Proposals for Reorganization

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24 Formerly Nanyang Public School (Nanyang Gong Xue), Shanghai Industrial College (Shanghai Gong Ye Zhuan Men Xue Xiao) was the predecessor of Shanghai Jiao Tong University.
25 The authority of the U.S. government in 1908 founded the University of the Philippines. The director of the library science department then was Mary Polk, an American librarian who graduated from the School of Library Economy, Columbia College.
of Chinese Education Association in the Philippines” for a high school teachers’ study (Cheng 2012). He was honored with four degrees – Bachelor of Arts in Literature, Bachelor of Science in Library Science, Bachelor of Science in Education, and High School Teacher’s Certificate (Cheng 2012). This task took him three years to accomplish; for many, it would take typically six years of study to finish. Upon his return to China in 1921, he worked as the principal of Guangzhou Normal School, professor and director of Shanghai Jiao Tong University Library, dean of Sun Yat-sen University Library, and director of Guangdong Provincial Library (Cheng 2012). In 1922, he founded the first Chinese library training school in Guangzhou, served as the first president of the Library Association of China in 1925, and hosted the first library exhibition in Shanghai in 1926 (Cheng 2012).

Additionally, he made significant theoretical contributions to the field of Chinese library science. In particular, his work focused on library theory, classification and cataloging, filing order of Chinese characters, library administration, library building, and local archives (Wang 2002). *Book Cataloging*, published in 1926, was his first book on the cataloging of Chinese books. From 1916 to 1965, he wrote 55 books and 448 articles (316 published, 132 unpublished), counting over 6,500,000 words (Cheng 2012).

Further background information worth mentioning is that in 1921 he taught courses on reference services and school library management at the Guangzhou Normal School. His aim for these courses was to prepare future schoolteachers with the skills necessary to guide children’s reading. In 1922, at the first annual conference of the CNAACE, he represented the library education section. His proposal to promote school libraries was one of the eight motions that were passed. Concurrently, he published
several articles on the school library, the children’s library, and children’s book selection. In his most renowned article on the children’s library — “Issues on Children’s Libraries,” he regarded childhood as the most important period of a person’s life and children as the hope of China’s future (Du 1926, 1-15). He called for attention to children’s education and children’s libraries, and he understood youth librarianship and youth services as an independent and challenging field within the study of library science (Du 1926, 1-15). In the same paper, he argued for the necessity and importance of children’s libraries, emphasizing that the goal of children’s libraries is to cultivate the habit of reading and to develop the habit of visiting the library (Du 1926, 1-15). He discussed in depth about the organization, personnel, facility, collection, circulation, and reading issues of children’s libraries (Du 1926, 1-15). His knowledge of literature, education and library science, expertise in library administration and empathy towards children made him the founder of the youth librarianship and a leader in the development of youth services in China.

Other prestigious library scholars of the Republic Era include the following people. LI Xiaoyuan was the founder and dean of the department of library science at the University of Nanking in 1927. Hong Youfeng was the university librarian at the University of Nanking Library. QIAN Yaxin was the honorary director of the Library Society of China. All of these scholars were actively involved in writing and advocating for children’s libraries.

Pioneer Youth Librarians

A 1934 graduate of the library school at the University of Nanking, WANG Bainian became the librarian of the FPSBNU and joined the Library Association of China in 1936 (Huang 2013, 97-102). As youth services librarian, he ensured that all of the
library furniture and equipment were customized to best suit children (Wang 1937, 111-25). Additionally, he instituted specific criteria for selecting children’s books, and he increased the library collection from a handful of books to over 4,000 volumes (Wang 1937, 111-25). He also adapted the He Yuan Chinese Books Decimal Classification to classify children’s books and employed card catalogs (Wang 1937, 111-25). Also, he adopted the open-shelf system, instructed children to read, conducted statistics on children’s reading, provided various library programs, and opened communication with publishing house as well as public libraries and academic institutions across the country (Wang 1937, 247-70).

Moreover, as a youth services pioneer, Wang published the library introduction brochure to advocate youth services, organized exhibits and contests to promote children’s libraries, and submitted proposals on improving children’s libraries at the third annual conference of the LAC in 1936. As a scholar, he published over 22 articles on various issues including children’s library practice, children’s library management, children’s books selection and classification, and children’s library history. After “reading around 300 papers on children’s libraries,” he compiled “The Bibliography of Articles On Children’s Libraries” in 1937 (Wang 1942). Based on a thorough literature review and visits to children’s libraries in Nanjing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Suzhou, and Wuxi, he wrote the book, History of Children’s Library in China in 1942, which was the first historical work on the development of children’s libraries in the Republic Era (Wang 1942). A youth librarian as well as a scholar on library science, he was successful in managing the library, enthusiastic in promoting library services to youth, and productive in academic publishing.
3.7.2 Education For Librarianship

The need to train modern librarians emerged along with the modern library. Before the advent of modern public libraries, libraries were established for the royal family, officials, scholars and elites’ private use. Those who could gain access to the libraries were intellectual people who knew how to use them. Therefore, there was no need to train librarians. As SHEN Zurong, also known as Samuel T.Y. Seng in English, the Father of Chinese Library Education noted, “throughout Chinese history there was no idea of formal library training nor the library training as we understand it today” (Seng 1935, 59).

3.7.2.1 Library School

The first library school in China, Boone Library School, was founded in 1920 by Mary Elizabeth Wood, an American missionary and librarian. At first, the Boone Library School was ancillary to a department of Boone University, and admission required two years of college (Seng 1935, 1-18). Each year, the school admitted around four to eleven students (Seng 1935, 1-18). In 1929, the school became an independent institution and was recognized by the government with college standing (Seng 1935, 1-18). The Ministry of Education endorsed the diplomas that were issued (Seng 1935, 1-18). The curriculum was designed to resemble the Library School of the New York Public Library and to suit Chinese situations. The courses included Chinese bibliography, Chinese and English reference works, Chinese and English book cataloguing and subject headings, Chinese and English book classifications, Chinese and English book selection and book review, library economy, history of libraries, library administration, library buildings, seminars and practicum; all courses were taught in English except the Chinese-specific courses
According to statistics, from 1920 to 1949, the Boone Library School graduated 311 students, of them 128 received a university diploma, 125 received a college diploma, and 58 people received training certificates (School of Information Management 2010). Consequently, it was called “cradle of modern Chinese librarians.” Its graduates accounted for more than half of the senior professional librarians in China at that time (Cheng 1990, 67).

Although the first library school in China was founded in 1920, the first courses on library science were introduced by Harry Clemons at the University of Nanking in 1913 (Lin 1985, 371). Clemons, formerly a reference librarian and English teacher at Princeton University, was then a professor of English and the director of the university library at the University of Nanking. He brought the idea of western librarianship to China and trained China’s first generation of professional librarians, such as HONG Youfeng, LIU Guojun and LI Xiaoyuan (Ye and Xu 2002, 17-20). In 1927, the Department of Library Science was founded at the University of Nanking. Its curriculum was similar to the Boone Library School, which included reference work, bibliography, cataloguing, classification, indexing, book selection, and history of libraries (Ye and Xu 2002, 18). The Department of Library Science graduates held important positions in libraries across China. However, the department was discontinued after only a few years (Lin 1985, 371).

Besides university and college level courses, library science courses were also provided in traditional schools. In 1921, DU Dingyou founded the division of library science at the Guangzhou Normal School and taught courses on reference work and school library management (Cheng 2012). In 1922, at the first annual conference of the
CNAAE, the library education section was formed. As the first national library association conference, the library education section recommended that traditional schools all over the country should add a course on library science to their curriculum (Seng 1935, 1-18).

3.7.2.2 Short-Term Programs

Another kind of library training was the short-term programs, such as summer schools or vocational training. For instance, in 1922, DU Dingyou initiated the Guangdong provincial librarians’ training program aimed to train schoolteachers. Of the 97 secondary schools in the Guangdong province, 44 schools sent their teachers to the training program. Courses on book acquisition, cataloguing and classification, and library management were provided as part of this program (Cheng 2012). In 1923, HONG Youfeng, alumni of New York State Library School and director of National Southeastern University Library, instructed the library science summer courses in the university; 80 students enrolled in the four weeks summer courses (Ye and Xu 2002, 18). Moreover, in 1925, the first nationwide librarians’ training program (The Summer School of Library Association of China) opened at the University of Nanking. The nation’s most prestigious library science scholars, such as YUAN Tongli, LIU Guojun, DU Dingyou, HONG Youfeng, and LI Xiaoyuan were invited to teach courses on library economy, library administration, classification and others (LAC 1925, 3). These kinds of programs were productive in training entry-level library staff.
3.7.2.3 Study Abroad

A productive, but admittedly privileged, way of library training was to study abroad. The first Chinese student to study abroad in an American library school was SHEN Zurong (1883-1976). He graduated from the Boone College in 1910, and he worked as an assistant librarian to Mary Elizabeth Wood at the Boone University. He was funded through a scholarship from the Chinese government, which made it financially feasible for him to attend the Library School of the New York Public Library from 1914 to 1916 (Cheng 1990, 54-58). He received his diploma from the Library School of the New York Public Library in 1915 and a Bachelor of Science degree from Columbia University one year later (Plummer 1916, 489-90). When he returned to China in 1917, another Boone graduate, HU Qingsheng (1895-1968), known as Thomas C.S.Hu in English, was sent to the Library School of the New York Public Library for library training (Boettcher 1989, 274). DAI Zhiquan (1888-1963), known as Tse-Chien Tai in English, was the librarian of Tsing Hua College. He also joined the class of 1918 at the Library School of the New York Public Library (NYSL 1933, 145). A few years later, he attended the State University of Iowa for a doctoral program and in 1925 completed his doctoral dissertation on library education. His dissertation, “Professional Education for Librarianship: A Proposal for a Library School at the University of Iowa,” was later published by H.W.Wilson and frequently cited (Tai 1925).

Around the same time, DU Dingyou was sponsored to study library science at the University of the Philippines and was honored there for a Bachelor of Science degree in Library Science in 1920. In 1919, HONG Youfeng (1893-1963), also known as Yu-Feng Hung, a University of Nanking graduate and the acting librarian of the university library
then, enrolled in the New York State Library School as a senior student and was granted a bachelor of library science degree in 1921 (NYSL 1921, 9-11). Meanwhile, he worked as a temporary cataloger for the Chinese collection at the Library of Congress in the summer of 1920 (NYSL 1921, 9-11). The other two University of Nanking alumni, LIU Guojun and LI Xiaoyuan, also advanced their study in the United States. Liu accomplished his master’s and doctoral program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (1922 to 1925). Li attended the New York State Library School in 1921 and received a bachelor of library science degree in 1923 (NYSL 1923, 7-10). Li was not the only Chinese student in the class of 1923 of New York State Library School. Indeed, his classmate, YUAN Tongli, known as Tung-Li Yuan, graduated from the National University of Peking, and was also a librarian at Tsing Hua College, was granted a bachelor of library science degree in 1924 (NYSL 1924, 12). Li and Yuan also shared a similar experience working as a cataloger of Chinese collections in the Library of Congress during the summer break (NYSL 1923, 7-17).

Upon their return to China, these American-trained librarians became indispensable role models for promoting modern librarianship, founding library schools, and teaching library science courses. Perhaps unsurprisingly, all of the first generation study-abroad Chinese librarians were also progressive leaders of the Modern Library Movement.

3.7.2.4 Youth Librarian Training

The professional training of librarians was insufficient in Republican China; however, the training of youth librarians was nearly nonexistent. There were only a handful of traditional schools that offered courses on reference work and school library
work for the training of future teachers. For instance, DU Dingyou founded the division of library science in the Guangzhou Normal School in 1921 and taught courses on reference work and school library management with the aim of preparing future school teachers for the skills of guiding children’s reading (Cheng 2012). Occasionally, some short-termed vocational programs provided courses on youth services. For example, in 1920, the Beijing Normal University held a summer library training program and invited SHEN Zurong and DAI Zhiqian to lecture on the issues of library administration, cataloging and classification of academic libraries, public libraries and children’s libraries (BNU 1982, 355-56). In 1924, DU Dingyou instructed library-training courses on primary school library management at the Henan Primary School Teacher Workshop (Tu 1996, 131). In 1925, two courses on youth services were offered at the summer school for the Library Association of China, held at the University of Nanking (LAC 1925, 3). LI Xiaoyuan and LIU Guojun co-instructed a course on the children’s library, and DU Dingyou taught a course on the school library (LAC 1925, 3). Each course session lasted two hours per week (LAC 1925, 3).

Despite evidence as to the existence of library training programs in the Republic Era, library education in China was relatively underdeveloped. The highest government agency that oversaw the development of library in China, the Ministry of Education, did not attempt to institute national policy for the professional education of librarianship or establish a curriculum on library science in government-funded national universities or colleges. The Library Association of China failed to plan a suitable professional library training system or professional qualifications for librarians. The short-life of some universities and institutions that provided library programs made once ambitious
endeavors fruitless. The competitive requirements for library school admission\(^{26}\) and the demanding course load for students\(^{27}\) made the Boone Library School the only steady library school in China, which never succeeded in attracting a large number of students. Further, most of its graduates filled positions in academic libraries instead of public libraries. Compared to the growing number of modern libraries, the number of professionally trained librarians was insufficient. The majority of library staff during the early period worked without qualifications or training. An unstable political environment, a lack of government support, a lack of professional qualifications, and a shortage of library education programs, contributed to the inadequacy of library education in the Republican China. Again, it did not adequately foster youth services education and training for youth librarians.

### 3.7.3 Discussion of the Requirement and Responsibility of Children’s Librarians

Although education for youth librarianship was scarce and children’s librarians were a rare find in public children’s libraries, discussions existed about the competencies of children’s librarians. For example, *the Library Science Quarterly* dedicated one issue to the discussion of children’s libraries in 1936. LENG Shuyuan’s “The Training of Children’s Library Workers and Their Duties” was among the seven articles published in this Children’s Library Number. Other library scholars such as DU Dingyou and library science educators such as ZENG Xianwen also took part in the discussions. The ideal children’s librarians were expected to be responsible for managing children’s libraries,

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\(^{26}\)Only college juniors may take the entrance examinations and only those successful in passing the examination are admitted.

\(^{27}\)Students have to be well versed both in Chinese and in English, take parallel courses in English and Chinese for most of the subjects, and learn museum work.
promoting library services, instructing and encouraging children to read, improving children’s morality, and cultivating future nationals (Du 1926; Leng 1936). The responsibility of cultivating noble nationals demanding, it also demonstrated society’s belief in the importance of children’s librarians.

The expected competencies for librarians serving children usually included three parts: knowledge of children, teaching skills, and library skills. Specifically, children’s librarians should be able to understand the psychology and needs of children, have knowledge of children’s literature, guide children to read, promote library services to children, and manage children’s libraries (Du 1926; Zeng 1929). In addition to the requirement of general and professional knowledge, the personality, virtues, manners, and temperament of children’s librarians were also emphasized. A woman with manners, a mild temperament, friendly attitude, and pleasing appearance was depicted as the most suitable candidate to be a children’s librarian (Du 1926; Zeng 1929; Leng 1936).

To become a competent children’s librarian, professional education was desirable. Leng suggested that children’s librarians should receive both library training and teacher education (Leng 1936, 83-89). For library training, children’s librarians should acquire the knowledge of library history, library law and regulation, library planning, children’s library administration and management, children’s collection selection, cataloging, classification and indexing (Leng 1936, 83-89). For teacher education, children’s librarians should study children’s psychology, education psychology, and education principles (Leng 1936, 83-89). Significantly, neither literature nor children’s literature were listed as part of the education program.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, the innovative leaders of the public
library movement were advocating for children’s libraries. The discussions and diffusion of youth librarianship were ongoing, and the few children’s librarians were dedicated to their work. However, the youth librarianship education and training were still inadequate, and the youth services librarians were lacking in number.

Youth services evolved into a viable part of modern public library services in the Republic Era. This occurred through the advocacy of the library association and the support of favorable library policy. It also involved the provision of separate children’s rooms, attention to children’s reading and children’s literature, the advent of separate children’s literature collections, the progress of youth services programs, and the contributions of pioneer librarians. This is demonstrated in the next chapter through examples of children’s libraries.
Chapter 4: Children’s Libraries in the Republic Era: Four Libraries

To illustrate the development of the children’s reading room at public libraries and school libraries, independent children’s libraries, as well as youth services provided during the early twentieth century, the author analyzes four libraries in the following parts. The four libraries included: 1) The Capital Library of China: one of the predecessors of the Capital Library of China is the Capital Popular Library, where the first children’s reading room in the capital city was founded in 1914; 2) The Tianjin Children’s Library: the Tianjin Children’s Library was established by the Tianjin Social Education Bureau in 1917 and was the first independent children’s library; 3) The Library of the First Primary School of Beijing Normal University, the school library was a model library in the 1930s; 4) The Shanghai Children’s Library, established in 1941, the Shanghai Children’s Library was one of the largest children’s libraries during the Republic Era.

4.1 The Capital Library of China

The first children’s reading room in the capital city Beijing was founded in 1914.

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28 Although the Library of the First Primary School of Beijing Normal University was a school library, it was named “Shi da yi xiao er tong tu shu guan (the children’s library of FPSBNU),” and the librarian WANG Bainian managed it as a regular children’s library instead of a school library. According to Ruth A Hill’s observation, “‘reading for pleasure’ is the motto of this library…though the children are contacted through the school, the use of the library is primarily recreational.” Additionally, the library was so renowned in the 1930s that every week it hosted a couple of visitors who were interested in youth services librarianship. The librarian introduced every detail of the library to the visitors. In this way, it served as a role model for other children’s libraries across the country. For this reason, the author included this library in this section.

29 The author was always wondering: if there was no Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and Civil War (1945-1949), what would be the progress of children’s libraries in the Republic Era? The Shanghai Children’s Library was opened in 1941 and was among the few children’s libraries to remain open during wartime. Therefore, the author included this library to glimpse the possible development of children’s libraries.
in the Capital Popular Library, which was one of the predecessors of the Capital Library of China. After the revolution of 1911, the mass transformation of the old book repository to the modern public library took place. During a time when society began to emphasize and propose the idea of popular education, the popular libraries came into being. In 1913, the Ministry of Education allocated 2,400 yuan, rented a 315m² (around 3390 square feet) residential property with 21 rooms and collected over 10,000 volumes of popular literature for the preparation of a popular library in the capital city of Beijing (Beijing 1994, 3 & 324). The Capital Popular Library was the first popular library in China, and its aim was to serve as a role model for the other popular libraries that followed. On 21 October 1913, the Capital Popular Library opened to the public. In 1914, the Capital Popular Library rented another 180m² (around 1938 square feet) residential property with 12 rooms and a spacious yard to construct a children’s reading room and playground (Beijing 1994, 3). It had four major characteristics that made it popular: most of the collections of popular library were popular materials written in vernacular with easy to understand contents, such as drama and fiction; besides general reading rooms, the popular library established a children’s reading room as well as a playground; the library’s targeted clients were the general public and children; reading was available at no charge. Given these characteristics, this library was one of the most visited libraries in China. As a library with only eight staff members, 20,000 volumes of books, 495m² (around 5328 square feet), and 100 seats, it was very much welcomed by general readers

30Having various facilities for public activities is a unique character of the popular library. It was stated in the 1915 “Ministry of Education Popular Library Regulation” that popular library should include a public stadium, in practice, popular libraries conceived of various ways to achieve that goal.
Since its inception, the Capital Popular Library recognized children as their primary clients and strived to provide quality services for them. The library staff realized that serving children was more challenging than serving adult readers. Adult readers generally followed the library’s reading rules regarding behavior, such as reading quietly and being respectful of the library’s materials and equipment. Children, however, were often too young to be regulated by the same standards and rules. They tended to fetch several books at a time, share a book together, sitting wherever they wanted to, place books upside down, speak and laugh loudly in public. The space seemed more like a public market to them than a library (Jingshi 1918, 38-40). The librarians concluded that too many restrictions on children’s behavior would preclude them from reading, but too much indulgence would result in misbehavior. While respecting children’s behavior in most aspects, the librarians also emphasized some guidelines for children to follow, such as lining up to request books, sitting quiet while reading, and placing books in order (Jingshi 1918, 38-40). All of this effort to provide guidelines produced positive results.

The Capital Popular Library’s children’s collection in 1914 was divided into four categories. These included the following: textbook; fairy tale; picture book; fiction and magazine (Zhuang 1914, 18-20). In 1916, with an increase in the number of volumes in the collection, children’s books were further divided into 10 categories. These included the following: Chinese classics; history and geography; science; calligraphy; handcraft, music, and gymnastics; fairy tale; series and magazine; fiction and biography; textbook and stories about famous people; picture book; and photography of attractions (Beijing 1994, 309-37). The daily number of visitors in 1914 reached 620 and increased to 895 in 1919 (Beijing 1994, 3).
1994, 88). Of the books checked, young readers’ top choices were the picture books and fairy tales, seconded by collected works, and primary school textbooks were ranked number three (Jingshi 1917, 75-76). For the convenience of children to find books, the names of children’s books were mimeographed and pasted on 24 wooden boards and displayed in the hallway (Jingshi 1919, 33-37).

In addition to providing books for reading, the Capital Popular Library also set up a playground for adults to exercise and for children to play. According to ZHUANG Yu’s visiting diary, the playground had swings, bars, beams and other facilities, and there was a room for storing sports equipment and accessories. As well as checking out books, readers could also check out sports equipment. On average, there were approximately 30 readers checking out the equipment every day, most of them were children (Zhuang 1914, 18-20).

The Capital Popular Library’s resolution to provide services to children resulted in high volumes of young visitors. According to the Capital Popular Library’s annual report, from 1916 to 1918, children accounted for the largest part of the library’s users, as shown in Table 4.1 (compiled from Beijing 1994, 127-30 & 317).

Table 4.1: Library visitors, 1914 to 1918

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Open Days</th>
<th>Visits /day</th>
<th>General Readers</th>
<th>General Readers’ Percentage</th>
<th>Children Readers</th>
<th>Children’s Percentage</th>
<th>Newspapers Readers</th>
<th>Newspaper Readers’ Percentage</th>
<th>Total Library Visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>620</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>No record</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>71,297</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>140,938</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>54,679</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>266,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>847</td>
<td>72,154</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>113,398</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>68,979</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>254,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>57,981</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>102,155</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>77,384</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>237,520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Capital Popular Library used voucher system for administration purpose. There were three kinds of vouchers: General Voucher, Children’s Voucher, Newspaper and Magazine Voucher. Readers got free vouchers for reading. The statistics from annual report were based on the calculation of vouchers.
From 1919 to 1926, the Capital Popular Library remained open six days a week and 11 hours per day, with reduced hours in summer (Beijing 1994, 130). It was the free library that had the longest open time, and the highest number of readers among all public libraries at that time (Beijing 1994, 131). It served as a model for other provinces’ libraries to follow.

Another public library in Beijing that provided services to children was the Central Park Reading Place, a predecessor to the Capital Library of China. The Central Park Reading Place opened to the public on 21 August 1917 (Beijing 1994, 131). It had three reading rooms: one room was for book reading, one room was for newspaper and magazine reading, and the third room was the children’s reading room (Beijing 1994, 131). At the very beginning, like the Capital Popular Library, it adopted two catalogs, one was a general book catalog, and the other was a children’s books catalog (Zhong 1919, 10-19).

Although the Central Park Reading Place did not have a playground, it found other ways to attract young readers. Toys, such as blocks, dolls, stuffed animals, and miniatures were collected by the library and placed in two custom-made five-level wooden shelves (Zhong 1982, 277-81). The shelves were located at the east end of the reading room, and the area was surrounded by wooden fence (Zhong 1982, 277-81). The librarians began to consider the function of toys and their association with children’s psychological development and knowledge building.

In 1927, the Capital Library and Capital Popular Library merged and renamed

32The library remained open for 10 hours a day from July to September.
as the Beiping\textsuperscript{33} First Library. The Central Park Reading Place was renamed as the Beiping Second Library, and then became the Beiping Central Library (Beijing 1994, 338). The Beiping First Library continued to consider youth services as one of the most important aspects of its readers’ services. Children welcomed the merger of the libraries. In 1930, the capacity of the library’s children’s reading room was 30 to 40 seats. However, it was not rare to see that 50 to 60 children shared the room at the same time (Beijing 1994, 133). Daily children visitors reached 400-500 in 1934 (Beiping 1934, 16-17). To better accommodate more children, the library established a new children’s reading room, updated the desks and chairs, and expanded the children’s room’s capacity to 60 seats in 1936, which accounted for nearly one third of the total 204 seats in the library (Beijing 1994, 135).

The Beiping First Library’s curator LI Wenyi (in office from July 1935 to September 1942) played an indispensable role in providing youth services to the library. Since he assumed office, he prioritized youth services, such as a children’s reading club and reading advisory (Beijing 1994, 139). He emphasized and promoted youth services in the library, and he also advocated library services for youth in the public sphere and published several articles and books on the topic of youth services.

To cultivate children’s reading interests, promote their reading abilities and guide them to read, the Beiping First Library organized a children’s reading club in 1936. The library formed the children’s reading club regulations, enrolled members, organized monthly tests, and awarded young readers (Beijing 1994, 139). One hundred fifty four children between the ages of 7 and 16 enrolled during the first year (Beiping 1936, 28). Each of them read at least one book a week, gathered several times a month to participate

\textsuperscript{33}The city of Beijing was called Beiping from 1928 to 1949, when the capital city of China was Nanjing.
in a reading contest, and discussed the book content or attended a seminar (Beiping 1936, 28). Children also frequented the Beiping Central Library. From October 1933 to June 1934, 10,006 children visited the library, of which 7,811 were boys and 2,195 were girls (Beijing 1994, 142).

After the Sino-Japanese War, the Beiping First Library was renamed as the Beiping Municipal Library, in 1945. The Beiping Central Library merged as a branch of the Beiping Municipal Library (Beijing 1994, 339). In 1948, a substantial portion of the building, collection, and staff from the Beiping Municipal Library Central Branch were reassigned to form the new Beiping Children’s Library. With a collection of 12,000 volumes of children’s books, the Beiping Children’s Library opened on 10 October 1948 (Beijing 1994, 99). From the children’s reading room to an independent children’s library, the public libraries of Beijing gave special attention to youth services from the very beginning and served as role models for other regions’ public libraries to follow.

4.2 The Tianjin Children’s Library

The Tianjin Children’s Library was the first independent children’s library in China. The Tianjin Social Education Bureau established it in 1917 (Zheng 1990, 10). The library provided services to 8 to 12 year-old children who could write their own names (Lin 1982, 382-84). Reading in the library was free of charge. Upon arrival, children received a voucher and wrote their name, age, school name, and the book number on the voucher; then, for the book, they handed the voucher to the staff (Lin 1982, 382-84). The library was unique in that it collected toys from all over the world,
and the librarians would display one or two toys during library open hours each day, because the administrator believed that toys could cultivate children’s interest for leaning.

Tianjin Children’s Library was an innovative leader in promoting other library programs. The library held youth service programs, such as book talk, game day, and toy play once every month. It also held symposia and exhibits once or twice per year (Zheng 1990, 10). Additionally, the library promoted educational development. Since its establishment, the Tianjin Children’s Library effected the promotion of children’s reading and learning interests, building connections with schools, and providing guidance for publishers and toy makers.

4.3 The Library of the First Primary School of Beijing Normal University

Founded in 1902 with the philosophy of “A university stands on teacher education” (Beijing Normal University 2010), the Beijing Normal University was the first university in China aimed at training teachers. The First Primary School was an experimental primary school for students from the Beijing Normal University; therefore, it was a benchmark primary school for the country. Each part of the primary school strived to be well equipped in order to serve as a model for schools across the country to follow, including the school library. The school library opened on 3 November 1934 and served as a model library ever since (Wang 1937, 112).

The library was equipped with specially-designed bookshelves, magazine racks, reading tables and chairs for children. For example, there were two sets of reading tables and chairs; the lower and smaller sets were for younger children and the higher and larger sets were for older children (Wang 1937, 113-14). Small as the school library was, it had
all of the equipment that a library needed. It was clean, ventilated, lighted, and decorated with seasonal flowers to cultivate children’s interests (Wang 1937, 114). The school librarian adhered to the rules that the library should be designed and decorated to suit children’s needs, to match the school’s environment, to meet its budget, and facilitate management (Wang 1937, 114).

Also, the library adopted certain rules for children’s book acquisition. As regards the book type, high graders’ books should be mainly words, middle graders’ books should combine words and pictures, low graders’ books should focus on pictures with bigger words, and kindergarteners’ books should contain colorful pictures (Wang 1937, 115). With regard to the content, the books should be practical, anti-superstition, promote science, empower children’s noble ideas, teach common sense, include literature of quality, and offer history lessons (Wang 1937, 115). With regard to outlook, the librarians were attentive to the form, printing, binding, and paper quality of the book (Wang 1937, 115). Although the librarians were mainly responsible for acquiring materials, the teachers of the school could also suggest a purchase for the library. Librarians distributed book suggestion forms to teachers at the beginning of every semester and made necessary purchases during the semester (Wang 1937, 116). Until 1937, the library had a children’s collection of 2,317 titles and 4,841 volumes that met the above rules and the number continued to increase (Wang 1937, 118). As shown by Table 4.2, children’s book series and children’s literature accounted for the largest part of the library’s collection (Wang 1937, 118).
Table 4.2: Statistics on children's collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General works (including children’s book series)</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>2,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Science</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>882</td>
<td>1,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History and Geography</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,317</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,841</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the fact that most of the students who graduated from the primary school would go to the affiliated middle school and potentially the Normal University, the librarians adopted the same classification system as the Normal School: the He Yuan Chinese Books Decimal Classification (Wang 1937, 119). The library also made title catalog cards and classified catalog cards to assist students with finding books (Wang 1937, 124). This library was among the few libraries that used open access stacks. All of the library collections were placed on bookshelves surrounding the reading room, and students were encouraged to find books by themselves.

The library was open to students for voluntary reading twice everyday. To accommodate students’ reading needs, readers were divided into two groups: high graders and middle graders. Each group had its own reading time (Wang 1937, 247). During lunch break, from 12:10 PM to 1:50 PM Monday to Saturday, both groups could

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34 The He Yuan Chinese Books Decimal Classification was created by Rizhang He and Yongjin Yuan in 1933. It was based on Dewey Decimal Classification and was adapted to classify Chinese books. This classification system is still used by some university libraries in Taiwan. The system includes 10 classes: 0 General Works, 1 Philosophy, 3 Religion, 4 Social Science, 5 Language, 6 Science, 7 Applied Science, 8 Art, 9 Literature, 10 History and Geography.
read in the library; during the afternoon break Monday to Friday, the library was opened 3:10 PM to 3:40 PM for middle graders only, and 3:40 PM to 4:10 for high graders only (Wang 1937, 247).

To promote and advocate children’s reading, the school library counted library visits by individual and by class. The number was calculated every week, and the school principal would announce the result every Monday (Wang 1937, 248-53). The library visitation sheet was also displayed as a billboard. Additionally, the library used various sheets and statistics to reflect and manage students’ reading progress. For example, the library calculated students’ library visits by week, marked students with over 100 visits, compared middle graders and high graders’ reading interests, and collected students’ reading reports (Wang 1937, 248-53). Below are two examples of the various sheets that the library created. Figure 4.1 is the library weekly reading statistics sheet. Figure 4.2 is the middle-graders with over 40 visits in a five-weeks sheet. The author translated Figure 4.1 to English, as shown in Table 4.3.
Figure 4.1: The Library of the FPSBNU’s weekly reading statistics

![Table 4.3: The Library of the FPSBNU’s weekly reading statistics](image)

Table 4.3: The Library of the FPSBNU’s weekly reading statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week:</th>
<th>Year:</th>
<th>Month:</th>
<th>Date: to Month: Date:</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Name of Grade</th>
<th>Number of Visits</th>
<th>Ratio of library readers and number of students</th>
<th>Student with the most visits</th>
<th>Number of top visits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Middle Grade</td>
<td>Grade:</td>
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<td>Grade:</td>
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<td>Grade:</td>
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<td>Grade:</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other
In addition to reading in the library, students could check out books to read elsewhere. There were 400 to 500 books checked out every week (Wang 1937, 258). Although the librarians promoted science, history and geography books, the students often preferred children’s literature books. According to the circulation statistics, in the spring of 1936, 7,310 books were checked out, 973 of them were children’s literature books (Wang 1937, 259). The following figure shows the statistics of checked-out books by class (1936 spring), and the author translated it to English in Table 4.4.
Figure 4.3: Statistics of checked-out books by class (1936 Spring)

Table 4.4: Statistics of checked-out books by class (1936 Spring)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Numbers checked-out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revolution Book</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Works</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Science</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative Literature</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Literature</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Literature and Individual Works</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folklore</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Literature</td>
<td>973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairy Tale</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The school library made library training and library education a priority because it believed that if students could not pursue higher education after graduation, they could still use the set of skills they had in order to study at public libraries and to make educational progress (Wang 1937, 258). Therefore, the librarians taught students how to find, retrieve and use a book, and they also educated students about how to act and behave in public places (Wang 1937, 260).

Furthermore, the school library held various programs year-round. It held new book exhibits, science book exhibits, music book exhibits, script exhibits, and hero biography exhibits to cultivate students’ reading interests or to assist in students’ ongoing projects (Wang 1937, 265). The library also held special events to promote library services. Take the “Build a Plane” program, for example, the students were asked to build

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.4 (cont.)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Myth</td>
<td>841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese Literature</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Literature</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabian Literature</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriental Literature</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Literature</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Literature</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Literature</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Literature</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian Literature</td>
<td>191</td>
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<td>Spanish and Portuguese Literature</td>
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<td>Russian Literature</td>
<td>149</td>
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<td>Nordic Literature</td>
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<td>Central European and Other Literature</td>
<td>133</td>
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<td>World History and Geography</td>
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<td>Chinese History and Geography</td>
<td>84</td>
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<td>Biography</td>
<td>309</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newspaper and Magazine</td>
<td>79</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,130</strong></td>
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a plane by themselves, and the winning planes would be displayed in the library (Wang 1937, 269-69). The librarians listed 23 relevant books as reference books and encouraged students to turn to those books for help (Wang 1937, 268-69).

The Library of the FPSBNU established a model for other children’s libraries to follow in almost all aspects: library building and environment, acquisition and collection building, cataloging and classification, reading promoting and circulation, reader education and programming. The success of the library was attributed to the hard work of librarian WANG Bainian and the support of the school principal. A 1934 graduate of the library school at the University of Nanking, he worked as a local primary school principal and then moved to Beijing and started his work as head librarian of the Library of FPSBNU (Huang 2013, 97-102). He was dedicated to the course of library youth services, as discussed before. The library would be less successful had the librarian not put so much effort toward improving it.

4.4 The Shanghai Children’s Library

Established in 1941, the Shanghai Children’s Library was one of the largest children’s libraries in the Republic Era. In celebration of the 1940’s Children’s Day, 11 organizations jointly proposed to found the Shanghai Children’s Library (Shanghai 1940, 15). These organizations included the following: China Salesian Society Shanghai Office, Shanghai Child Protection Bureau, Shanghai Parents’ Education Research Board, Shanghai Children’s Hospital, China Women and Children Relief Association and Chinese Medical Association (Shanghai 1940, 15). On 28 September 1940, the
Organizing Committee for the Shanghai Children’s Library was established (Shanghai 1941, 3).

From 21 March 1941 to 5 April 1941, the Organizing Committee for the Shanghai Children’s Library initiated a fundraising campaign and received generous donations from individuals and organizations that were local, domestic and abroad (Shanghai 1941, 4). The Shanghai Children’s Library opened on 12 July 1941. It remained open every day from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, except Tuesdays (Shanghai 1941, 10). The library held a collection of over 10,000 books, divided into high grades, middle grades, and low grades (Shanghai 1941, 10). Those books were further classified by genre and marked by different color for the use of children (Shanghai 1941, 10).

The library was located in the downtown area of Shanghai and covered an area of more than 3,000 square feet (Shanghai 1998). Its main building was a Western style. The library had small, open bookshelves for children. The walls were decorated with pictures of celebrities, from domestic to abroad, such as Confucius, YUE Fei, SUN Yat-Sen, Isaac Newton, Thomas Edison, and Abraham Lincoln (Shanghai 1941, 10). The librarian’s speech at the ceremony described how the Shanghai Children’s Library’s main mission was to serve the city children’s needs, to provide quality children’s books and to guide children’s reading (Hu 1941, 1). To serve more children, the Shanghai Children’s Library set up 30 circulation stations across the city where children could check out books for free using a library card (Shanghai 1941, 11). The circulation stations were located in organizations, groups, associations, or shops, and run by volunteers. Each station was stocked with books provided by the library, and the books rotated every ten days (Shanghai 1941, 11).
4.5 The Developmental Models

The process of developing children’s library in China started with children’s rooms. In conjunction with the growing interest towards children’s reading and books, there appeared separate children’s literature collection and youth services programs that connected children with texts as well as a few pioneer youth services librarians. The discussion of children’s libraries above demonstrates these developmental models. As Ruth A. Hill, the American youth services librarian who visited China in 1937, stated in her writing on children’s libraries in China, these early children’s libraries “demonstrate most encouragingly that China can have, and no doubt soon will have, general library service for children.” (Hill 1937, 157)

The Capital Popular Library children’s reading room, Central Park Reading Place children’s reading room, and Tianjin Children’s Library emerged in the 1910s, at a time when society began to emphasize and propose the idea of popular education. Under the influence of the “The Ministry of Education Popular Library Regulation”, popular libraries developed across the country and extended their services to less-educated populations, including children. As the first children’s libraries in China, these early children’s reading areas were comprised of a makeshift room or two that were apportioned from rented residential properties, without specially designed children’s space. Although the collections for these early children’s libraries were limited in quantity and variety, and the youth services programs that they provided were premature, these children’s libraries were welcomed by young readers from the beginning.

With the development of modern libraries and the evolvement of youth
services techniques in the 1930s, the Beiping First Library expanded its children’s departments. This included a specially designed and arranged children’s reading room, and it provided regular programs, such as a children’s reading club that attracted hundreds of young readers. Meanwhile, the newly established library of FPSBNU integrated children’s needs into every aspect of library services – from library design and arrangement, acquisition and collection building, cataloging and classification, reading promoting and circulation, to reader education and programming. Under the administration of the professional youth service librarian, the library served as a model for other children’s libraries to follow in almost all aspects. Youth services in the Republic Era reached a pinnacle when the Shanghai Children’s Library was opened in the 1940s, with a specially-formed organizing committee, a spacious and inviting library space, a large children’s literature collection of over 10,000 volumes and a team of professional librarians. The Shanghai Children’s Library was dedicated to serving the city children’s needs, providing quality children’s books and guiding children’s reading.

The above mentioned representative children’s libraries illustrates the development of the children’s reading room at public libraries and school libraries, independent children’s libraries, as well as youth services that were provided during the early twentieth century. The development of these libraries also demonstrates the developmental models that were established in the previous chapters.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

This part concludes the research findings, chronicling the development of children’s libraries in China from 1912-1937. It summarizes the major elements that contributed to the progress of youth services in China and identifies external and internal factors that influenced this development. The author reflects upon the contributions of this study as well as the limitations of it. Suggestions for future research are included with the intention of continuing this study of the history of youth services librarianship.

5.1 Research Findings

Since 1909, librarians began to address the needs of children in professional settings by introducing Western youth service models and discussing how to establish, organize, and operate children’s library in China. The first children’s reading rooms were founded in public libraries in late 1910s. Programs, such as story time, exhibits, and readers clubs took place in these libraries periodically. Motivated by the New Culture Movement of 1917, modern children’s literature – non-didactic texts written in an easily accessible vernacular language – began to flourish in China. The foundation of the Library Association of China in 1925 and the Resolution of 1933, stipulating that every library should have a children’s reading room, further advocated and formalized youth services. From theoretical discussions to policy support, Chinese children’s libraries showed a steady development in the Republic Era.
5.1.1 Development of Children’s Libraries in the Republic Era

Four phases may be identified from the development of children’s libraries in the Republic Era. These include advocating for children’s libraries (1909-1914), the emergence of early children’s libraries (1914-1925), the development of children’s libraries (1925-1933), and the flourishing of children’s libraries and youth services (1933-1937).

5.1.1.1 The Advocate of Children’s Libraries (1909-1914)

In 1909, CAI Wensen’s publication and first work on the subject of children’s libraries in China, “Ways to Establish Children’s Libraries,” which appeared in the first volume of the Educational Review, marked the beginning of a century’s long history of advocating for children’s libraries and youth services librarianship in China. Since then, scholars, educators, and librarians began the dialogue of youth services librarianship in professional settings by introducing Western youth service models and discussing how to establish, organize, and operate children’s library in China. Although there were no children’s libraries at that time in China, these works introduced the model for children’s libraries and disseminated the idea of youth services to the public, thus preparing public opinion for their arrival.

5.1.1.2 The Emergence of Early Children’s Libraries (1914-1925)

In 1914, one of the first children’s reading rooms was founded in the Capital Popular Library in Beijing. Although some of the early public libraries, such as the Hunan Provincial Library, admitted young readers over age twelve to the libraries since 1905, there were no special services or collections provided for children (Li and Zhang 1985, 152-158). Children either shared the same reading room and/or the same reading
materials with adult readers. Notably, the children’s reading room in the Capital Popular Library was the first reading room to be set apart from the adult’s reading room, and it was equipped with age appropriate collections for young children. The Capital Popular Library was also among the first libraries to provide youth services to children. In 1917, the first independent children’s library was established in Tianjin by the Tianjin social Education Bureau (Zheng 1990, 9-12). In addition to providing reading materials for children, the library initiated youth services programs, such as book talk, game day, toy play, and exhibit, to attract young readers (Zheng 1990, 10). A handful of other early children’s libraries also emerged in the period between 1914 and 1925, such as children’s reading rooms in the Beijing Central Park Reading Place, Jiangxi Provincial Library and Zhejiang Public Library (Beijing 1994; Jiangxi 1982; Zhejiang 1918).

Although a separate space was allocated for children’s reading during this time, the space was not different from an adult’s space. In other words, there was no special design for young readers. The collections for these early children’s libraries combined Confucian classics, textbooks, popular reading materials, as well as children’s periodicals and books. Some youth services programs, such as book talk and exhibits, were occasionally provided in these children’s libraries by library staff (instead of youth services librarians). Due to the lack of professional associations and overall guidance, the emergence of these early children’s libraries during this period was spontaneous, and the services provided were premature.

5.1.1.3 The Development of Children’s Libraries (1925-1933)

The founding of the Library Association of China in 1925 launched a nationwide advocacy and promotion of youth service. It started a period of rapid development for
children’s libraries. Independent children’s libraries, children’s departments in public libraries, and children’s reading rooms emerged across the country. For instance, the Hangzhou Municipal Children’s Library was founded in 1931 with over 5,000 volumes of children’s reading materials (Wang 1942, 40-45). The Anhui, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, and Guangdong provincial libraries and Nanjing, Beijing, Tianjin municipal libraries all expanded their children’s departments (Wang 1942, 40-45). Popular libraries were also actively involved in establishing children’s reading rooms and providing services to young readers.

As an increasing number of libraries constructed their own library building, discussions began as to how to plan and design children’s space. Children’s space became more appealing and functional than early models that were stern and dull. The collection size of most children’s libraries increased due to a growing number of children’s periodicals and books published during this time. Meanwhile, educators and librarians started to discuss general criteria for selecting children’s reading materials for libraries and recommended bibliographies and booklists for children’s reading and children’s library collections. With the advent of children’s spaces and the increasing amount of children’s reading materials, children’s libraries began to advocate their services and to develop multiple programs to promote reading and literacy. A wide range of services and programs, such as reading guidance, readers’ club, storytelling, summer reading, and themed competitions were designed and provided by children’s libraries. Various media, including periodicals, bulletins, broadcasts, and flyers were utilized to advertise these services. Some children’s libraries consolidated and standardized their services by publishing library general rules and regulations. Training programs, including
courses on youth services librarianship, were occasionally provided during this period, and discussions on the competencies for children’s librarians were on-going. Nonetheless, most children’s libraries were still managed by persons with little or no educational background on youth services librarianship.

5.1.1.4 The Flourishing of Children’s Libraries and Youth Services (1933-1937)

In the second annual conference of the LAC in 1933, a resolution was passed to build independent children’s libraries in every city and county and to establish children’s reading rooms in every library (LAC 1933, 54-55). The resolution was the most influential library policy on children’s libraries to date. Local governments responded to this resolution promptly, and they became actively involved in promoting children’s libraries in their regions. By 1934, there were 93 independent children’s libraries in China (Chiu 1935, 16). In 1936, according to surveys conducted by the Zhejiang Public Library, of all the 34 provincial libraries then, 19 mentioned specifically that it had at least one separate children’s reading room (Yan 1983, 63-100).

With the great increase in the number of children’s libraries, discussions about children’s library design became more serious. There were specific guidelines on the design of children’s libraries’ equipment, such as reading tables and chairs, as well as bookshelves and the arrangement of them. Children’s space evolved to be more functional, inviting, and inspiring. The publication of children’s literature also peaked in this period with the increased quantity and increased variety of books. Librarians developed more specific criteria for content, type, and format, for selecting children’s materials. They tried to select appropriate materials to meet and cultivate children’s reading interests. Moreover, children’s library collections expanded from a small number
of books in the 1910s to hundreds or thousands of titles, covering a wide variety of classes in the 1930s. Diverse youth services programs were provided to better connect children with texts. These included readers’ club, which had been formalized into regular library services. However, the youth librarianship education and training were still inadequate, and the youth services librarians were lacking in number.

Until the eve of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, children’s space was widely established in public libraries. Youth services became a viable part of public library services, and children’s libraries developed to be an indispensable part of Chinese modern libraries.

5.1.2 Factors Influencing the Development of Youth Services

Several factors emerged from the analysis of historical materials: the influences of Western librarianship, the cultural movement and modern educational reform, the public library movement, the Republic Era’s investment in child welfare, and the advocacy of the Library Association of China. These factors converged historically and contributed to the development and progress of youth services in the Republic Era.

External Factors

In the wave of Western Learning, the development of Chinese modern public libraries in general and children’s libraries, in particular, was greatly influenced by external forces, such as Japanese librarianship and American librarianship.

5.1.2.1 Japanese Influences

At the turn of the twentieth century, to seek advanced education and to strengthen
the nation’s power, the Qing government and prominent educators encouraged students to study abroad. Due to the vicinity of the border, the similarity of the culture, and the success of adapting western knowledge to its own education, Japan became the top destination for students’ studying abroad and for government officials’ study visits. The number of students studying in Japan increased from around 1,100 in 1904 to the peak of 12,000 in 1906; the number then decreased to 1,400 in 1912 (Zhang 2000, 71). It was estimated that a total of over 38,000 students studied in the Japan until 1911 (Zhang 2000, 71). During the same period, the number of Chinese students studying in the United States was around 300 (Fryer 1909, IX). Some of these students formed the major force that translated Japanese library science books, introduced Japanese library models, and advocated for modern librarianship.

In 1908, the Tokyo Hibiya Library established the first children’s library in Japan. It held a sizable collection of children’s literature, such as picture books, fairy tales, geography and history, and science (Ertong 1910, 15-16). In the next year, inspired by the Hibiya Library’s youth services, CAI Wensen, an educator with the experience of studying in Japan, published, “Ways to Establish Children’s Libraries,” which was the first work of its kind to discuss the subject of children’s libraries in China (Cai 1909, 49-50). In 1910, based on Tokyo Hibiya Library’s children’s collection, another essay was published in the Educational Review discussing the issues of children’s literature and children’s reading (Ertong 1910, 15-16).

In 1924, the Commercial Press published a translated work, *Er Tong Tu Shu Guan Zhi Yan Jiu (A Study of Children’s Library)*. Originally written in Japanese, this work discussed in detail elements of children’s libraries, such as facilities and equipment,
youth service programs, children’s collection and classification, and library administration. As the first monograph on the topic of children’s library published in China, this work introduced the elements of a children’s library to the Chinese public and provided theoretical guidelines for managing a children’s library. Among the handful of works on the subject of children’s libraries in the early twentieth century, the introduction of Japanese models, translation of Japanese works, and reflections of Japanese practice accounted for a substantial part.

Although European and American children’s libraries were widely established and fully developed at that time, in practice, it was difficult for nascent Chinese modern libraries to emulate these models because the gap was overwhelming (Wang 1942, 16). Therefore, SUN Yuxiu suggested that Chinese public libraries follow the Japanese model by allocating a space in the library for children’s reading (Wang 1942, 16). Through the introduction and dissemination of Japanese ideas by translation, the understanding and transforming of Japanese practices by official visits and students studying in Japan, and the implementation of Japanese models (by setting up children’s space), Japanese youth services librarianship influenced the emergence of children’s libraries in China.

Later, as Chinese modern libraries developed further, a more modern and advanced system of librarianship became necessary. Chinese library society came to realize that Japanese librarianship was mainly borrowed from Western librarianship and that Chinese libraries could benefit more by directly studying modern Western librarianship. Moreover, without library school available until 1918, Japan could neither disseminate library science to China systematically nor help train the much needed professional librarians for Chinese libraries (Wu 2003, 4-8). Therefore, the influences of
Japanese librarianship on Chinese librarianship did not sustain. By the 1920s, American librarianship gradually became the primary type of librarianship in China (Cheng 1991, 373; Lin 1998, 5).

5.1.2.2 American Influences

SHEN Zurong was the first Chinese librarian to receive advanced library science training in the United States. He received his diploma and returned to China in 1917. Until 1924, seven other Chinese librarians went to the United States for advanced library education. During that time, public libraries in the United States served more than half of the nation’s population, provided extended user-oriented services, like the adult reference service, reader’s advisory, and reading promotion. Meanwhile, American public libraries established youth services on a department basis, extended it to branches, developed reading guidance techniques, provided booklists, story hours and displays to attract young readers. Additionally, a group of professional trained youth services librarians established their work on the evaluation and selection of children’s literature. Upon their return to China, these first generation study-abroad Chinese librarians became the progressive leaders of the Chinese Modern Library Movement. Not only did they bring American library science and technology to the emerging Chinese libraries, leading the development of modern Chinese libraries, some of them, such as LIU Guojun, DU Dingyou and LI Xiaoyuan, also strongly advocated children’s libraries and were actively involved in writing or teaching the subject of library services to youth. These progressive leaders of the Chinese Modern Library Movement exerted great influence on the development of Chinese youth services librarianship.

Two prominent Americans also left their mark on the development of youth
services in China. Mary Elizabeth Wood, the American librarian and missionary, came to China in 1899 and significantly influenced the development of the modern library movement in thirty years. In 1910, she founded the Boone Public Library in Wuchang. Following the practices of American public libraries, the Boone Public Library collected a large amount of modern books, adopted an open-shelf system, allowing free access, and providing other services, such as lectures and story time (Cheng 1992, 377). This library demonstrated American librarianship to Chinese librarians and set a model for a modern public library for Chinese libraries.

In 1920, Wood established the Boone Library School, the first library school in China. The library school designed its curriculum to resemble the American library school and appointed American-educated library scholars as well as American librarians as lecturers. For instance, two American librarians, Grace Darling Phillips and Ruth A. Hill, successively taught courses, including children’s librarianship and library economy from 1934 to 1937 (Tu 1996, 212). From 1920 to 1949, the school trained over 300 students, which accounted for more than half of the senior professional librarians in China at that time. Further, Wood led a campaign for the return of the Boxer Indemnity Fund and the usage of the fund to promote modern library development in China. The fund returned by the U.S. government was used to establish modern libraries, support librarians studying in the American library schools, and to fund scholarships and professorships for the Boone Library School. Renowned as the “Queen of Modern Library Movement in China” by Chinese librarians, Wood’s activities in China spread American librarianship and promoted the development of modern Chinese librarianship.

The other American was Dr. Arthur E. Bostwick, then librarian of the St. Louis
Public Library. As an ALA official delegate, he visited more than fifty Chinese libraries in 1925 and delivered public lectures on American librarianship and library practice such as public support, free access, open-shelf, home use, and user-oriented services on many occasions, which were accompanied by film (Cheng 1997, 371). In his report to the ALA and LAC after his trips, he strongly recommended that Chinese libraries make their collections “as useful and as freely accessible to the reading public as possible” (Bostwick 1926, 45). His promotion of American library philosophy and practice was so successful that “almost every librarian in China at that time wanted to emulate the American way of operating libraries” (Cheng 1997, 371). Under Bostwick’s recommendation, free access of library materials became the main objective for public libraries over the next twenty years (Tu 1996, 380). In Du’s influential article, “Issues on Children’s Libraries,” he quoted Bostwick’s words – “we buy children book by tons in U.S.” – to advocate free and open access of reading materials for children (Du 1926, 1-15). Through the recommendation of Bostwick and promotion of Du, an increased number of Chinese children’s libraries gradually shifted from a closed-shelf system to an open one and aimed to provide reading materials for young readers at no cost.

The influences of American’s youth services librarianship on Chinese youth services librarianship was also reflected by Chinese scholar’s discussions and research on children’s libraries. Among the early standards of children’s space allocation and equipment design introduced by librarians in the 1920s and 1930s, most of the librarians, such as LIU Guojun, ZENG Xianwen, and XU Jiabi, based their suggestions on the existing practices of American children’s libraries. Of the works on children’s reading in the 1930s, Chinese scholars introduced American peers’ studies of the relationship
between children’s reading interests and their age. For example, JIANG Licai, translated American works related to ways for stimulating children’s reading interests (Jiang 1930, 1-37). Others compared their research results with American trends, such as XU Xilin’s investigation and his reference to Gray and Munroe’s report on the reading interests and habits of American children (Xu 1930, 20-53).

Meanwhile, inspired by American youth services librarians’ practice of suggesting booklists for children’s reading, Du first introduced the idea of children’s book selection to Chinese libraries. Then, he suggested the first selected bibliography of children’s literature for Chinese children. This was followed by other bibliographies and booklists that were suggested by librarians and educators in the 1930s (Du 1926; Du 1928). Other works on American youth services librarians’ training, introductions of children’s library operation, and case studies of American’s children’s libraries were continuously translated and introduced to Chinese libraries.

Through the advocacy of American-trained progressive leaders of the Chinese Modern Library Movement, as well as Wood and Bostwick’s promotion of American library philosophy, and prominent scholars’ dissemination of American youth services techniques, the theories and practices of American youth services librarianship were widely introduced to Chinese libraries. The American youth services librarianship provided a much-needed model for emerging Chinese children’s libraries to follow and influenced the development of youth services librarianship in China during the 1920s and 1930s.

5.1.2.3 Other International Influences

Except for a few articles introducing models of children’s libraries and practices
of youth services in England, France, Philippines, etc. (Qian 1929; Dan 1934; Yu 1935), the influences of other country’s youth services librarianship on the development of Chinese youth services in China were difficult to trace. It was fair to conclude that, of the international youth services librarianship that were introduced to Chinese libraries in the Republic Era, Japanese models were first introduced and influenced the emergence of children’s libraries in China until the 1920s. Since then, American youth services librarianship became the most influential librarianship to impact the development of youth services librarianship in China.

5.1.2.4 Internal Factors

The development of children’s libraries in China in the Republic Era was influenced by external factors, such as international youth services librarianship, especially the American one, as well as a combination of factors from within.

The cultural movements and educational reforms in the Republic Era popularized colloquial language, brought literacy to a large portion of the population, stimulated the extensive publication of periodicals and books in colloquial language, promoted mass education and established institutions for social education, thus facilitating the modern public libraries and services available to children.

From the opening of the first public libraries in 1905 to the existence of over 2,000 libraries until the eve of the Sino-Japanese war, China’s modern libraries developed at an unprecedented speed. The establishment of these modern public libraries and the widespread spirit of the public librarianship established a foundation for the development of youth services librarianship in China.
In Republican China, views of children and childhood became more complex. Children were increasingly viewed holistically, having inner and outer lives, while childhood came to be understood more as a crucial, discrete period, separate from adulthood. The understanding of children and childhood, and the evolving discourse on child psychology, child development prompted society’s attention to children’s welfare. Various agencies and institutions were formed to ensure children’s health, protect their rights, and promote their well-being, among which children’s libraries emerged as a social-educational institution to offer child-centered education and services.

Under this tide, many great writers of the Republic Era became evolved in writing native modern children’s literature for Chinese children. Publishing houses started to produce large amounts of children’s periodicals and books in vernacular language. Chinese children’s literature flourished in the 1930s with a steady growth in quantity and variety. Modern children’s literature replaced the Confucian classics and adult popular literature and comprised the collections of most children’s libraries.

The foundation of the Library Association of China in 1925, and the annual conference of the association, provided policy support for the development of children’s libraries. It offered a national forum for children’s libraries and library staff to exchange ideas and experiences. Additionally, it organized library training and published research journals to advocate library science and youth services librarianship.

To conclude, the genesis of youth services librarianship from 1912 to 1937 was the result of a series of factors that attributed to the Republic Era’s social, cultural and educational changes. The cultural movements and educational reforms brought literacy to the general public and stimulated the needs of modern public libraries. The development
of modern public libraries directly led to the emergence of children’s libraries. Society’s
discovery of children and childhood provided a rationale for child-centered library
services to youth. The flourishing of indigenous children’s literature facilitated the
fostering of youth services, and the support of the Library Association of China further
promoted the development of youth services librarianship.

5.2 Significance of Research

Scholarship on the history of the modern Chinese libraries is largely concerned
with the development of youth services in public libraries in China since 1949. There is a
noticeable lack of literature that addresses the beginning of the modern public libraries in
China or the genesis of youth services in China. A minimal amount of specific research
exists that traces the development of youth services librarianship in modern public
libraries in China. Of the available scholarship, most focuses on the modern public
library movement, and youth services librarianship is given only minimal consideration.
Significantly, this research is the first endeavor to systematically study the genesis of
children’s libraries and youth services in China, and it writes the history of Chinese youth
services librarianship.

This research chronicles the development of children’s libraries in China from
1912-1937. It examines the major elements that contributed to the progress of youth
services in China and identifies external and internal factors that influenced this
development. Through the analysis of elements, including the support of the library
association and library policy, the appearance of separate children’s rooms, the advent of
separate children’s literature collections, the progress of youth services programs, and the
contributions of pioneer librarians, this research demonstrates encouragingly that China had children’s libraries since the establishment of the Republic of China and that youth services became a viable part of modern public library services since its inception.

Further, this research contributes to the study of the relationship between American librarianship and Chinese librarianship. In her study of the history of youth services librarianship in the U.S., Jenkins regarded American youth services librarianship as a “classic success” and wondered, “Has the U.S. model been used in other countries? If so, How? If not, what other models have been followed?” (Jenkins 2000, 129). This work responds to these questions and analyzes the impact of American and international librarianship on the development of youth services librarianship in China. It contributes to the history of children’s libraries in China as well as to the history of youth services librarianship in the United States.

Finally, this work contributes to the understanding of the Republic Era’s investment in social, cultural, and educational discourses in relation to the development of library services for youth in China. This research situates the genesis of youth services in public libraries within the context of general, social, cultural, and educational changes in the Republic Era. Chinese youth services emerged in an environment that extended the services of modern public libraries and realized a fuller understanding of childhood. This work offers an indispensable contribution to a burgeoning research focus on modern educational and social development in the Republic Era. Specifically, it addresses how the growth of children’s libraries was affected by educational, social, and cultural conditions in the Republic Era and anticipates the development of youth services under the current conditions in China.
Chinese public libraries today are increasingly attentive to youth services. The National Library of China Children’s Library opened to children in May 2010. It marked the end of no service to children in the National Library of China. It also initiated the promotion of services for children in public libraries nationwide. Since 2012, the Library Society of China launched the “Library Services to Children Improvement Plan” to further the discourse of youth services librarianship and to advocate library services for children (LSC 2012). When current trends are reviewed, the history should not be forgotten, and the first question to ask is: How did youth services librarianship begin in China? This doctoral dissertation is the first work on the genesis of children’s libraries in China and endeavors to provide a compelling discovery and analysis of the growth and the development of youth services in China from 1912 to 1937.

5.3 Limitations of This Study

Although the author attempted exhaustive examinations of archives and published materials on the research subject, a series of upheavals hindered the discovery of some primary and secondary sources and limited the kinds of work that could be finished. First of all, although the official documents from the Library Association of China would be a useful source for primary research, these documents are almost impossible to trace because the Library Association of China no longer exists. The Library Association of China was founded in June of 1925 and remained until 1949. The Library Association of the Republic of China (Taiwan) founded in 1953 and the new Library Society of China founded in 1979 are the two descendants of the Library Association of China; however, according to the author’s correspondence with the two
organizations’ representatives, none of them hold official archives of the Library Association of China. Secondly, many libraries were shut down, destroyed or forced to move elsewhere during the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and the Civil War (1945-1949). During those periods, part of the library collection was destroyed, and part of the library collection was transferred and never returned. Moreover, the entirety of China’s library system was disrupted on an “unprecedented scale” during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Libraries were undermined, librarians were exiled, and library collections were carried off, robbed, or burned (Ting 1983, 134-60). These situations made it impossible to acquire all of the primary resources that were once available.

The author also tried to examine archival materials from early children’s libraries. However, most of the early children’s libraries were shut down during the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and the Civil War (1945-1949) and never reopened. For example, the author supposed that the current Tianjin Children’s Library was the same children’s library that was the first independent children’s library in China established in 1917. After corresponding with the current Tianjin Children’s Library curator, it became apparent that the current Tianjin Children’s Library was built in the 1970s and had only a nominal connection with the old one. Of the four libraries that are still in existence today, and that the author visited, the attempt to examine archival resources was not always as productive as expected. Few systematical archives were kept in these libraries. Given the situations of upheaval discussed above, it is possible that other libraries that the author did not have a chance to visit did not keep value archives, either. However, if time and budget allows, the author intends in the future to identify more Chinese children’s
libraries that are still in existence today or current libraries that are descendants of early children’s libraries. The author would consult their archives, if there were any.

Although archival materials from early libraries might be limited, this research could rely more on governmental archives as supplements. For instance, as one of the national archives of China, the Second Historical Archives of China in Nanjing held a large collection of official documents and original records of the central government during the Republic Era. Provincial, city archives, and local chronicle offices may also hold documents, records, and materials related to library development during the Republic Era. Exploring these governmental archives may yield documents and materials including central and local funding and policies towards libraries, which would provide additional insight on how libraries in general and youth services in particular were shaped from 1912 to 1937.

This study might be more complete if the author was able to use the oral history method to recapture this part of history from those who have experienced children’s libraries in the Republic Era first-hand. Though it is unlikely to locate any of the progressive leaders of the modern public library movements or the librarians that worked with children during the Republic Era on account of the extensive amount of time that has passed, it is still possible to locate participants who were young library users at that time and who had personal experience with the children’s libraries and library services provided. Also this methodology carries limitations, such as biased, unreliable personal memory and the limitations of personal experiences, if the participants’ stories were analyzed properly, they could provide information about the Republic Era’s children’s
libraries that could not be found elsewhere in printed sources, thus adding detail to this study.

Although the emergence and development of youth services in China reflected external influences, these influences might be more complex than particularly American or particularly Japanese influences. It was not easy to separate Japanese librarianship from Western librarianship because part of Japanese librarianship was borrowed from Western librarianship. In a similar way, it might be too early to eliminate the possibility of other Western librarianship’s influences because of the modern globalization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is hoped that a more complete analysis of the external librarianship’s influences on the development of youth services in China will be revealed in future study.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This research initiated the study on the history of the genesis of youth services librarianship in China and demonstrated the existence of library services to children since the Republic Era. It also prompted questions that await answering: Why did specialized children’s spaces appear before specialized children’s collections in China? Who influenced the progress from admitting young readers to the allocation of children’s space and the establishment of children’s libraries (Policy makers? Educators? Librarians? Adult library users?) Librarians created evaluative standards and recommended book lists since 1920s, but there were no book awards for children in the Republic Era. Why did these standards and booklists not culminate with the advent of any book awards? Did children’s library collections reflect these evolving standards? Why was there no formal
library education program for youth librarians in the Republic Era, or today? Who were the key leaders, library educators, and librarians that prompted the genesis of library services for youth in China? What was the role that they played in the development of children’s libraries? Besides modern schools and children’s libraries, were there any other types of child welfare institutions that developed during this period? What were the connections among children’s libraries and these organization and agencies?

The other indispensable part of library services to youth is school libraries. They had a longer history in China than public children’s libraries. The first kind of library services available to youth in China was provided in school settings in the late Qing dynasty and early Republic Era. This occurred when the emerging modern schools started to adopt the students’ initiative teaching method and establish school libraries to assist students’ self-learning. An initial examination of the primary sources indicated that professional organizations and prominent library leaders strongly advocated library services to youth in schools. It revealed that special courses on library science were provided to normal school students with the hope of training future school librarians. Also, school libraries existed in most primary and secondary schools in the Republic Era. However, of the available scholarship, most focuses on the modern public library movement and the academic library development, with school libraries given approximately no consideration. If the history of library services to youth in public settings received little attention from library scholars, then the history of library services to youth in school settings received almost none. It is time to write the history of Chinese school libraries. It is hoped that the study of history and progress of school library services would empower people still developing school libraries in China to provide
wider access to a variety of materials and information, and to help more children succeed in school.

Another area that is worth further study is the history of children’s libraries in China from 1937-1949 and after 1949. Although it is generally agreed that library services were interrupted, reduced, depressed, stopped and even retrograded during war time: Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and the Civil War (1945-1949), some children’s libraries still thrived (or at least survived) through the war. The establishment of Shanghai Children’s Library in 1941 is one example. However, was the case of Shanghai Children’s Library only a unique one because of the special status of Shanghai? What about children’s libraries in other parts of China?

After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the government paid special attention to the development of modern libraries and Chinese libraries in general made great progress after 1949. What is the history of Chinese youth services librarianship since 1949? Were the youth services librarianship in the People’s Republic of China inherited from the Republic Era or did children’s libraries emerge as completely new ones? How was the progress of children’s libraries achieved in the People’s Republic of China compared to the advances made by the general library development?

As the Chinese saying goes, “learn from history we can see the rise and fall.”

\[35\] Shanghai was opened to foreign trade as a treaty port after the defeat of the First Opium War in 1942. Since then, its territory was gradually divided as the International Settlement, French Concession, and Chinese administered parts. Each part had a considerable degree of political autonomy. It grew to be the Asian financial center in the 1930s. The Japanese occupied the Chinese administered parts and the International Settlement after 1937. The Shanghai Children’s Library was located within the French Concession.
The study of the history and progress of children’s libraries in China would provide lessons for today’s development of youth services librarianship and continue to encourage society’s attention to library services for children.
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Appendix A: Questionnaire for Children’s Reading Interests and Reading Habits

Vote for Our Favorite Books, Magazines and Newspapers

Note:

1. The questionnaires will be analyzed as a whole, and individual responses will not be released or publicized.

2. Please return the questionnaire

3. You could keep anonymous if you wish.

(1) Please list your favorite ten books and check the reasons that apply. You could check more than one reason. It’s OK if the number of your favorite books is less than ten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of your favorite books</th>
<th>Why do you read those books?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content is interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(2) Please name your favorite magazines.
(3) Did you read newspapers yesterday?

Did you read newspapers the day before yesterday?

Do you read newspapers everyday?

If you read newspapers everyday, how much time do you spend on reading newspapers?

(4) Which columns do you read when your read newspapers? Mark them with X

Which columns do you spend most time reading? Mark them with O


(5) Name:

Age:

Gender:
### Appendix B: Comparison of Conditions in the United States and China during the First Half of the Twentieth Century

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Libraries</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A transition period from traditional book storage houses to modern libraries.</td>
<td>• The establishment of the American Library Association in 1876, the publication of the Library Journal in the same year, as well as the philanthropy of Andrew Carnegie contributed to the rise of American public libraries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The first public libraries were opened to public in 1904. In 1909, the first law pertaining to the establishment of public libraries was promulgated. By 1916, most of the provinces had established provincial public libraries.</td>
<td>• In the late 19th century and 20th centuries, public library services were expanded and strengthened: Branches were established, women and children were recognized as legitimate clientele for the library, the concept of open stacks was generally accepted, hours of services were greatly increased, and the belief that the library should provide informational or reference service to its patrons was widely endorsed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• From 1917 to 1926, there were an increased number of popular publications. Public and popular libraries in many cities and towns were established to hold the vast amount of popular books and magazines written in colloquial language.</td>
<td>• By 1913, the U.S. Office of Education reported that the nation had 3,000 public libraries and each contained over 1,000 volumes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The following list is complied from reports by Arthur E. Bostwick on his mission to China as an ALA delegate in 1926: It appears that nowhere in China at present is there a free public library precisely like those now operating in the United States.</td>
<td>• In the 1920s, the focus of public libraries shifted from collections to readers and from preservation to use; user-oriented services, like the adult reference service, reader’s advisory, youth service and reading promoting, all made significant progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Absence or inadequacy of public support.</td>
<td>• By 1923, 3873 towns with populations over 1,000 opened public libraries and thus served more than 50% of the U.S. population. Carnegie libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Absence or infrequency of modern books.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>3 Restriction to use in the library building.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Closed shelf operation.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 Inadequate “cataloging”.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 Absence of “extension work” and other efforts to increase the public use of books.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7 Absence of buildings adapted to the work.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Staring in 1927, the new Nationalist Government at</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Nanking made a significant effort to promote the aims of public libraries and consider the recommendations of Dr. Bostwick.
- By 1935, approximately 1,000 public libraries existed in China, and these libraries offered a colloquial style of popular publications to appeal to middlebrow readers.
- During 1937-1949, most of the public libraries were closed, and a great number of collections (15 million volumes) were destroyed or lost.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Childhood</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boys and girls were treated as little men and women; children were representation for maintaining family traditions of the past.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male children were preferred in old China.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The nation’s attitude toward childhood changed in the early 20th century: children were regarded as the future of a nation.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The period between 1917 and 1937 witnessed an unprecedented explosion of discourse for and about children, childhood and child development.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In the 1920s and 1930s, intellectuals such as Zhou Zuoren argued for children’s rights: children should not be treated as incomplete little people but complete individuals with their own inner and outer lives.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Republic China discovered childhood as an “epistemological, ideological, institutional and even commercial” category.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Public libraries survived and provided enhanced services during the Depression and WWII, 1930-1945.
- In 1939, ALA adapted the *Library Bill of Rights* to guide library services.

- The idea of “modern childhood” emerged in the middle of the 18th century and regarded children as innocent and fragile.
- Since then, childhood was viewed as a separate stage of life that required special care and protection.
- At the turn of the 20th century, the invention of a “long childhood” and the “discovery” of adolescence emerged and was devoted to extending children’s education and freeing children from early labor.
- To save the child, a series of laws were passed to restrict child labor in the early 20th century.
- Meanwhile, child welfare professionals also focused scientific study on children’s emotional, physical and sexual development and advised a scientific approach to childrearing.
- During the Depression, the concept of “the teenager” appeared and young people ended their childhood earlier.
| **Children’s Literature** | • Before the advent of Chinese children’s literature, fables and folk stories were the most popular form of literature for children.  
• In the early 20th century, Western children’s literature, translated for Chinese-speaking audiences, was prevalent, especially before native Chinese works became more available.  
• In 1908, the first and most popular children’s literature series in China – *Tong Hua (Fairy Tales)* – appeared in Shanghai. It included both translated works form Western as well as adapted works from Chinese historical stories.  
• In 1920, Zuoren Zhou was the first person to use the phrase “children’s literature” (Er Tong de Wen Xue) in China.  
• Children’s literature flourished in the May Fourth period, many great writers of the Republic Era were involved in writing distinctly modern children’s literature.  
• In the 1930s, over a dozen periodicals for children existed in an easily accessible vernacular language.  
• From 1897 to 1949, the Commercial Press, one of the two major publishers for children’s literature, published 88 children’s books and 14 children’s book series. |
|  | • The 20th century recognized literary and artistic quality of children’s books.  
• Printing and technical improvements promoted resurgence of picture books in the early 20th century.  
• In 1919, Children’s Book Week was introduced to promote quality literature for children, and it was a significant stimulant for the development of children’s literature.  
• Children’s book reviewing and evaluation practices by professional appeared.  
• The world’s first children’s book award, the Newbery Award was presented by the ALA in 1922.  
• In 1924, *Horn Book Magazine* was founded and dedicated to reviewing children’s literature.  
• Since 1938, the Caldecott Medals was awarded to the most distinguished picture book for children.  
• From 1946 to 1949, around 900 volumes of juvenile books were published each year, and included various genres: fiction, picture books, nonfiction, folktales, fantasy, poetry, among others. |