A CONGRATULATORY LETTER ON BEHALF OF THE
SOCIAL CULTURAL DEPARTMENT OF THE CULTURAL
MINISTRY OF THE STATE COUNCIL

Liu Xiaqin, Deputy Director of the Social Cultural Department
of the Cultural Ministry of the State Council

Dear Respected Dr. Marian Koren, former Standing Committee Member of the
IFLA Governing Board,

Dear Respected Dr. Susan M. Allen, Chair of the Standing Committee of IFLA
RBMS,

Respected Ladies and Gentlemen:

Today, the 2006 IFLA RBMS Preconference has a grand opening in beautiful
Hangzhou. First of all, I would like on behalf of the Social Cultural Department of
the Cultural Ministry to show my warm welcome and sincere thanks to all the parti-
cipants. I would like to give special thanks to IFLA RBMS and the scholars and
specialists who show concern for and support of the preservation of Chinese call-
igraphy and print cultural heritage. This preconference is hosted by IFLA RBMS
and the Cultural Department of the Zhejiang Provincial Government, and it is
sponsored by the Zhejiang Library. I would like to express my cordial thanks for
the hard work and excellent arrangements made by the hosts, sponsor and the co-
organizers.

Progress and the advancement of human civilization is the great result of the
common effort of creativity and wisdom of the peoples all over the world over
thousands of years. And it is also the great achievement of mutual exchange ex-
periences, mutual study, and mutual promotion among different countries and
various nationalities. China is one of the great Four Ancient Civilizations in the
world. China’s splendid civilization has ancient origins and a long development.
Chinese characters are the only surviving written characters of the four such writ-
ten characters in the world, and these are the only ancient characters that have
been handed down, developed, and applied to the present day. Chinese written
characters have changed frequently resulting in a new look and a sense of progress
with each passing day. Writing tools and the art of calligraphy are unique, and by
making them better known they excite romantic charm and endless fascination.

The creation and advancement of the techniques of paper making and printing
are the Chinese people’s great contribution to human civilization. Ancient Chinese
calligraphy and printing experienced development that was distinctive and out-
standing. On July 13, 2006, at the 30th UNESCO World Heritage Conference held
in Vilnius, Lithuania, the Yin Dynasty Ruin (ca. 15th century B.C.) in China’s An-
yang (Henan Province) was officially entered into the “List of the World Heri-
tage.” The Yin Dynasty Ruin is a place where there is a great quantity of inscrip-
tions on bones and tortoise shells that were found and unearthed there, and it was
the glorious starting point of Chinese written characters. Chinese calligraphy and
printing culture has been employing the same techniques for more than 3,000
years progressing from inscriptions on bones and tortoise shells, to writing on
bamboo and silks in the Yinshang Dynasty (16–11 century BC) until paper was
created, improving and popularizing these activities from the West Han Dynasty
(206 B.C.–8 A.D.) to the Jin Dynasty (256–420 A.D.); engraving was also prac-
ticed in the Yinshang Dynasty and the Zhou Dynasty (1027–221 B.C.); the Chi-
nese calligraphy brush was developed and used in the Chin Dynasty (221–206
B.C.); followed by the creation, improvement, and spread of the use of wood-
blocks for printing, letter board printing, and register printing. All of these excel-
lient achievements of Chinese civilization belonged not only to China but also to
the world. Other countries and nationalities also made an important contribution to
the advancement and development of writing and printing techniques.

In the process of the continuous development of Chinese characters, writing and
printing techniques, the important role of Zhejiang Province should never be taken
lightly. The civilization found in the Zhejiang Province had accumulated a very
profound foundation. The Hemudu Cultural Ruin (before 4600 B.C.), the Liang-
zhu Cultural Ruin (before 3300 B.C.), and the Majiaban Cultural Ruin (before
4750 B.C.) all show their radiance and beauty to one another in the Zhejiang Prov-
ince. Early in the Qinli Emperor Period of the Song Dynasty (1041–1046 A.D.);
an ordinary person in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, Mr. Bi Sheng, created the let-
ter board printing technique based on great improvement and development of
wood block printing. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368–1911 A.D.)
Zhejiang took the lead in developing China’s commercial economy and became
first in the manufacture of printed materials, the book trade, and book collecting.
Tianyi Ge Library in Ningbo City, the earliest surviving library in China, has a
history of 440 years. Its collections of the local chronicles and the records of those
candidates who passed the civil examination provided its own color and character.
The architecture and the collection of wood blocks for printing in the Jiaye Library
in Huzhou City have exerted a tremendous influence on library work. Wenlan Ge
Library, which was the Emperor’s Library in the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911 A.D.)
is the only existing one of the three Emperor’s libraries in South China, and it is
located on beautiful West Lake, Hangzhou. The collection of “Si Ku Quan Shu”
(“four vaults” of classics, history, philosophy and the collected works of literature)
is well preserved in the Zhejiang Library, where it enjoys a legendary and glorious
status. All of these examples of civilization: calligraphy and printing, were handed
down by our ancestors, showing that persistently the people of Zhejiang paid spe-
cial attention to and took good care of their cultural heritage, and made a special
and great contribution to carrying on human civilization.
Civilization based on writing and printing has consistently accompanied the footsteps of human progress. The traditional civilization should be continued. The excellent cultural heritage should be preserved; it should be carried on; and it should be spread. At the present time in China, the traditional techniques of papermaking, wood block printing, letter board printing, and Chinese calligraphy brushes are well kept traditions, carried forward, applied, and developed in Zhejiang Province achieving great, beneficial results for society as well as for the economy. We have to work hard continuously to make the most of the favorable opportunity brought about by this international seminar, further strengthening international academic research and exchange. We must study and use the advanced experiences and achievements of other countries for reference. At the same time, we can promote mutual understanding and cordial friendship among countries and nations, as well as among different civilizations, and thereby bring about a great advance in societal harmony and world harmony. Intense, world-wide popular interest in the Chinese language is growing more and more each day, and it is evidence of the tremendous influence of Chinese culture on the world and various, frequent culture exchanges. We are sure that the Chinese people have the duty and ability to preserve, use, and carry forward our excellent national traditions, our civilized heritage in order to make a great contribution to the development of human civilization, and to contribute to the harmony and beauty of the world in the future.

With best wishes for great success of the Preconference.

Thank you very much!