

LCQ9: Books on the June 4 incident in public libraries

Following is a question by Hon Andrew Cheng Kar-foo and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, Ms Florence Hui, in the Legislative Council today (June 24):

Question:

I have learnt that books on the June 4 incident which provide substantial historical information and points of view are commonly available, and borrowing such books from the public libraries is one of the means by which members of the public and students get to know about this episode in history. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the respective titles and numbers of books on the June 4 incident which at present may and may not be loaned out in each of the public libraries (including mobile libraries);

(b) whether the Government will make a change to allow the loaning out of the reference books on the June 4 incident which are popular among the readers but not available for loan at present; and

(c) regarding popular books in the public libraries which are often all loaned out and reserved, what procedures and criteria have been adopted by the authorities for procuring additional copies and determining the number of copies to be procured; whether books on the June 4 incident are at present often all loaned out and reserved; if so, of the titles of the books concerned and whether the authorities have procured additional copies of such books in response to the demand?

Reply:

President,

(a) As at June 15, 2009, the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) holds 149 titles of books on the June 4 incident and related topics and the number of copies totals 1,162. Details of the relevant books and the number of copies available for loan are listed in Appendix I. In response to the demand of the readers, HKPL has ordered an

addition of 250 copies of these books. By then, the percentage of the relevant books available for loan will be 82%. Readers who wish to borrow books available for loan may place a hold and select to pick them up at any public libraries through the Library Automation System. Apart from the books listed in Appendix I, the libraries also keep periodical and newspaper materials containing information on the June 4 incident for readers' use.

(b) Reference materials on the June 4 incident are kept in the reference libraries to facilitate readers to do research on the subject inside the libraries at all times. If the reference materials are allowed to be loaned out, there may be occasions where readers cannot have immediate access to the materials they need in the libraries. Moreover, some books can no longer be replenished in the market and it is therefore necessary to deposit them in the reference libraries for better preservation. This arrangement will also minimise chances of loss and damage in the course of loaning out. For some reference materials which are in heavy demand, HKPL will, in the light of the actual needs of readers and the market supply, consider acquiring additional copies as lending copies. The same arrangement applies to all books in general.

(c) HKPL has been following the principles laid down in the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto in acquiring library materials for the provision of a balanced and diversified library collection to meet the needs of people of different ages and sectors for information, research, self-learning and profitable use of leisure time. In acquiring library materials, HKPL will take into account the overall status of its collection, demands and interests of different users, quality of the materials concerned, the development of its collection, situation on book supply, etc. The materials acquired will cover as many subjects as possible.

In order to optimise the use of resources, HKPL will assess the needs and reading interests of readers on the basis of the loan statistics when it determines the titles and number of copies to be acquired. Readers can access to or borrow library materials across the whole HKPL system through the integrated Library Automation System and the Online Public Access Catalogue. Furthermore, HKPL reviews periodically the number of holds placed through the Library Automation System to assess readers' demands for library materials and determine the number of additional copies to be acquired so as to meet readers' needs.

Titles related to the June 4 incident which are often loaned out and reserved are

listed in Appendix II for reference. Among these titles, the English and Chinese editions of Prisoner of the State: the Secret Journal of Zhao Ziyang have registered considerable number of holds. Additional copies have therefore been ordered from the book suppliers and will be made available for loan to the public.

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