



LIVRES CANADA BOOKS®

The Book Market in China for Canadian Children's Publishers

Report of the Livres Canada Books
Trade Mission to China
November 15 – 19, 2017

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Introduction

With a population of the largest in the world, at over 1.3 billion and growing at a rate of 0.41 (2017 est.), China is the second largest economy in the world¹. Sustained economic growth combined with move to a market-oriented system that plays a major global role make the country a stable environment for international business.

The objective of Livres Canada Books in organizing the trade mission to Shanghai was to report on China as a potential market for Children's Canadian publishers in terms of rights sales and distribution. In view of the increasing interest in this market, 2017 presented an excellent opportunity for the Association and the Canadian publishing industry to seek trusted intelligence in this market. The Livres Canada Books delegation consisted of nine Canadian children's publishers with an active interest in or dealings with the Chinese market, accompanied by Livres Canada Books' Executive Director, François Charette.

The delegation travelled to Shanghai from November 15-19, 2017 and met with relevant Chinese publishers, distributors, associations, government officials and visited libraries and bookstores, in order to gain an understanding of the different facets of the Chinese publishing market. The delegation also met with officials from the Canadian Consulate General to discuss possible future support and to build upon the work and findings of the Trade Mission.

Following the success of the trade mission to Shanghai, Livres Canada Books felt that a Canadian presence at the Shanghai Children's Book Fair (CCBF) would build on the momentum of the mission, and will therefore be considering the feasibility of a collective Canadian presence at future editions of the Shanghai Children's Book Fair.

This report is a complement to the existing Livres Canada Books market guide, *Selling Canadian Books and Translation Rights in China*, that was published in 2016, and also a complement to the briefing webinar that we held on January 16th, 2018. This report is a summary of comments from the delegation and an exhaustive list of contacts. The goal was to share experience learned with publishers that did not have the opportunity to take part in the mission.

¹ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html>

Summary for the mission to Shanghai Children's Book fair

Meizhen Dang – Publishing Director, DC Canada Education Publishing

For the first time, DC Canada Education Publishing participated the Shanghai Children's Book Fair 2017 as an exhibitor, in addition to the Trade Mission to Shanghai.

The trip was a good one as we had made about 4 or 5 leads that may bring in more sales from the Chinese market. In particular, we saw interest in French-language children's books.

For any publisher who wants to sell books directly to China, here are what we learned:

1. Make your book legitimate to sell in China, which means the books are officially imported by a qualified Chinese company. Then book sellers can sell them in China.
2. For any book to be sold in China, make a nice introduction page, show some inside pages, picture of the product, picture of the author etc.
3. Promote your books to support the sales by working with the book sellers.

The copyright sale is another option if you can't sell the books directly in China.

The children book market is very active but also very competitive.

There are three markets for the foreign children books: One is home--parents buying books for their children. The other is the after school programs, reading clubs etc., which usually run by private companies. The companies buy the books for their members or suggest members to buy the books. This is a big market and there is a need of foreign children books too.

The other market is the school market, usually foreign children books are not allowed to be used in the classrooms.

Kaela Cadieux – Managing Editor, Annick Press

Insights for Canadians considering this market

As I'm sure many of my fellow delegates will mention, Chinese children's book publishers are especially interested in publishing series. They prefer to publish simultaneously or to package books as box sets, so while I did see interest in some of Annick's newer series, I believe that interest will only come to fruition once we have four books or more. I was asked more than once if we had any series with ten or twenty books, so there is clear demand for this kind of content.

One of the best tips for Canadians considering this market would be to take advantage of resources and positions within the Canadian government. Our group had the pleasure of meeting Ms. Yue Huang, who is the Cultural Diplomacy and Creative Industry Officer for the Consulate General of Canada in Shanghai. We also met with Mr. Jason Walsh, who is the Consul and Trade Commissioner at the Consulate. Ms. Yue Huang's position was created specifically to foster connections between the creative industries in China and Canada.

I believe these contacts would be helpful for anyone planning to attend a fair in China or to sell rights to Chinese publishers. For example, Annick attended CCBF in Shanghai in 2016, but our books never made it through Chinese customs and our Rights Director was forced to conduct all her meetings with catalogues only. Mr. Walsh said that while his office might not be able to solve this problem completely, they can reach out through contacts in the Chinese government to ease the way through this kind of bureaucratic road block. Ms. Huang also had a follow-up call with our Rights Director once I returned from the mission to discuss our STEM titles and possible interest from local publishers I didn't have a chance to meet with at the fair.

In addition to these connections through the government, having an agent is crucial, and really facilitated both our meetings with Chinese publishers and my own understanding of how to pitch our books in China. I noticed the greatest interest in our non-fiction STEM titles, but our agent also helped me identify which of our picture books would have an art style that might coincide with Chinese interests and visual taste.

I learned three essential things that I believe will shape how Annick approaches our rights in China going forward.

1. Market scale: For many of the larger publishing houses, up to a quarter of their yearly titles are foreign buy-ins. This gives a sense of scale for the kind of market that is potentially available to Canadian publishers, especially when, for example, Shanghai Century Publishing Company puts out between 200 and 300 new titles a year.
2. Interests and demand: Based on our group meetings with Shanghai Century Publishing Company and Hsin-Yi, as well as my own independent meetings, I would say that there is a growing interest in titles with a feminist or social justice angle, as long as they don't intersect with Chinese political interests. I also saw a strong

interest in our board books, despite going into the fair with an understanding that the higher printing costs of board books makes them undesirable for Chinese publishers. Chinese publishers also have a continued desire for titles with a clear educational value, either in terms of direct correspondence to school subjects or general moral, life-lesson education.

3. Timing: For anyone entering this market, it is important to note that you may experience a slight delay with rights sales. Chinese publishers are especially interested to know which titles are well-known or award-winning in North America, so frontlist titles that are not yet on sale are a harder sell. We've had more clear success with our backlist, or by following up on frontlist titles once media recognition has built up.

Future plans and business activities with Chinese publishers:

While many of our rights sales into China and our connections established through the mission are still coming to full fruition, we did purchase a title as a result of the trip. We will be publishing *One Rainy Day* by Shoba Viswanath and illustrated by Ashwathy P.S and Anusha Sundar in Fall 2018. It was originally published in India by Karadi Tales as *One Dark Cloud*.

Andrew Wooldridge – Publisher, Orca Book Publishers

Publisher Andrew Wooldridge attended the Shanghai Children's Book Fair as part of the Livres Canada Books Delegation. 'This was a well-planned, interesting and seemingly effective mission to China'.

China is becoming an important foreign market for Orca Book Publishers and after a number of years of attending the Beijing Book Fair this was our first attendance at the Shanghai Fair which focusses on children's material. The visits that were arranged by Livres Canada Books to Shanghai-based publishers and libraries were interesting and illuminating.

Orca had a number of meetings -more than 25 -many arranged by Livres Canada Books but also a number that Orca arranged independently. We received a large amount of interest from companies that we had not dealt with before and also continued to build on existing relationships. Prior to the fair we had signed cooperation agreements with two Chinese publishers -Dolphin Books and Sichuan Fine Arts Publishing. We also followed up on an existing arrangement with Asia 21 who act as representatives to other publishers but also as a go-between with the school market. As a direct result of attendance at Shanghai we sold the *Just Enough* Series to Baby Cube and feel that there is more potential with them. We are in communication with a number of other publishers at this stage and feel there is more potential for sales and also developing reciprocal arrangements.

We have negotiated a number of Chinese deals in the past year including purchasing North American rights for two novels being made into feature films. We see China as a growth market for Orca, primarily because of the closeness because of Orca's location on the west coast but also because we see that our material is in demand in the market and fills a need. We remain committed to developing long-term relationships with Chinese publishers, both to sell books in translation and also to service the burgeoning English Language Learner market.

The Livres Canada Books trade mission to Shanghai was an overall success for Orca Book Publishers and helped to bolster our foothold in the market.

Adrienne Tang – Rights Director, Kids Can Press

Tips for Canadians considering this market?

- If you aren't working with Chinese publishers, you should! There are a lot of Chinese publishers and the market is strong, especially for children's titles as the middle class is willing to spend money on books for their kids (and their education).
- With so many Chinese publishers, you will be able to find at least one like-minded publisher interested in the style of art, or a certain topic for any given title.
- If possible, it is worthwhile to work with a Chinese agency – Chinese publishers are accustomed to dealing with agents (and for the most part prefer to work with agents in the Chinese language). These agents will get to know your list and find the right publisher(s) for your titles. A good agency will also vet the publisher and ensure payments and royalty reports are sent in timely manners.
- The Canadian government has resources for Canadian companies looking for help navigating trade in China – the Trade Commissioner Service has people on the ground in China to help with questions regarding best practices, dealing with customs, and helping find contacts or contact information. <http://trade.commissioner.gc.ca/>

What was the most interesting thing you learned?

- There is a strong appetite for children's books in China – particularly picture books and (illustrated) non-fiction titles.
- A series of books (3-4+ books) is coveted, but single titles also sell really well
- Chinese publishers put a lot of emphasis on titles that have won awards (even if they are obscure and regional)
- Bricks and mortar bookstores exist, but very few people actually buy books in store – they mostly go to browse and then buy online.
- Don't underestimate a good book – titles that I didn't think would sell, were still of interest. Topics that seemed too regional, might still work in China.

Have any of you been contacted or have you pursued any particular business activity with a Chinese house since our mission – or have plans to do so?

- We followed up with every meeting and contact that we made in Shanghai. Post-fair, we've concluded several deals, including a 4-book series and a wordless picture book. We've also been working more closely with our distributor (of our English language books) after having spent quality time at the fair together. We also feel like we have a better relationship with our agent, since spending more time together at the Shanghai Book Fair (versus the brief interactions we have in Bologna or Frankfurt). The fair was a great success!

Barbara Creary – International Rights Director, *Dominique et compagnie*

Planning for the participation of Canadian publishers at the Shanghai International Children's Book Fair began in May 2017 and then really picked up steam in September 2017. Livres Canada Books hired a Chinese consultant to introduce Canadian publishers to Chinese publishers and to invite the publishers to meet at the Book Fair.

Already in October, meetings were being set up by the consultant. Some Canadian publishers already had agents in China, some didn't. There began a lot of exchanges concerning possible meeting times. In the case of *Dominique et compagnie*, the consultant set up prior to the fair, meetings with eight (8) new Chinese publishers; their agent in China set up eleven (11) meetings before the fair started and six (6) more meetings were added to the schedule during the fair. In 2½ days, this publisher met with 25 different Chinese publishers; all interested in the books being presented by the Canadian publisher. This publisher wasn't the only one with as many scheduled meetings. In fact, most of the Canadian publishers worked almost non-stop during the three days.

Livres Canada Books worked hard to find hotels in Shanghai to propose to the publishers, they also took care of getting the information necessary to ask for letters of invitation and informed the publishers about visa requirements. Livres Canada Books also organized the consolidated shipping of the books to be exposed in the Canadian publishers' stand at the fair, made sure they were received in Shanghai, etc. The usual logistics for an international fair.

Livres Canada Books had hired two translators; one to translate English/Chinese and one to translate French/Chinese. They were very efficient, and they were kept busy. Most Chinese publishers however, do try to send English-speaking editors to the fairs but many times it was really important to have the translators with us.

From a participating Canadian publisher's point of view, the fair was a wonderful, well-organized fair. The fairgrounds were easy to get to, by taxi or by subway (by the way, the subway is easy to maneuver in, the information is in English, well- indicated and easily followed).

All the Canadian publishers stated at a round-up meeting after the Shanghai Book Fair that it is necessary, even imperative, to have a stand at the fair, otherwise, it's not possible for the Chinese publishers to see the books.

Some of the Chinese publishers met at the fair:

- Beijing Arcadia Culture Communication Co. Ltd.
- Hangzhou Unicorn Culture Creativity Co. Ltd.
- Zhejiang Juvenile & Children's Publishing House
- Hebei Publishing House
- Sunnbook Culture & Arts. Co. Ltd.
- Foreign Language Teaching and Research Publishing Co. Ltd.
- Shang Tong Children's Books
- Hangzhou Le Du Culture Creativity Co. Ltd.
- Sichuan Children's Publishing House

We all much appreciated the reception that the Consulate General of Canada and Livres Canada Books organized for us and our Chinese agents and publishers on the last day of the Fair.

Because of our attendance at the Shanghai Book Fair Dominique et compagnie has negotiated Chinese rights for the very popular in China last November, picture book: *C'est l'histoire d'un ours*.

Building on our participation at the Shanghai Book Fair, we met with a number of Chinese publishers at the Bologna Book Fair in March 2018. Dominique et compagnie has already ceded Chinese rights to 36 titles. We hope to continue our good relationships in China.



Margie Wolfe – Publisher, Second Story Press

Mostly, it was all very worthwhile.

To date we have sold nine books to publishers whom I met there. We actually had a couple of offers for one series.

It seemed to me that primary interest was for picture books and publishers there were particularly interested in series.

I very much enjoyed our meetings at publishing houses there. Tying the trip to the Shanghai Book Fair was very smart. I had nearly twenty-five meetings there and at least two of the publishers we had met in the previous days sought me out there. I think the fair was probably the most productive part of the mission. We were also able to set up appointments with several of the publishers from Shanghai in Bologna.

Would we go back? Maybe not every year but yes, probably again.

Summary of Meetings

Libraries and Bookstores

Shanghai Library

1555 Huaihai Middle Rd, Xuhui Qu, Shanghai Shi, China, 200000

www.library.sh.cn/english/

Modern Bookstore

South District, No. 1218 Yan'an Middle Road, Jing'an District, SB2-02

Sisyphus Bookstore

Shop L2-27, 2/F, OneLink Mall, 230-232 Tianhe Lu, Tianhe District

Poplar Kids Republic Bookstore

262 Yuyuan Lu, near Wulumuqi Bei Lu (Jingan Metro), Jingan District, Shanghai, China

+86 021 6248 9033

www.poplar.com.cn

Publishing Houses

Publisher: **Aurora Publishing House**

Contact name: Ms. Zhang Meng/ Rights Manager

Email: chenguangyibian@126.com

Website: www.cgbsyn.com

Publisher: **Beijing Arcadia Culture Communication Co. Ltd.**

Contact name: Lu Dianwei, President; Zhang Lei, Foreign Rights Manager

Email: arcadiabook@163.com

Publisher: **Beijing Children and Juvenile Publishing House,
Beijing Publishing Group Ltd.**

Contact name: Meng Xie, Editor

Email: 729015175@qq.com

Website: <http://www.bphg.com.cn>

Publisher: **Children's Fun Publishing Co. Ltd.**
Contact name: Yuhua Zhao, Rights Manager; Ledi Qu, Rights Staff
Email: ldqu@childrenfun.com.cn
Website: <http://www.childrenfun.com.cn>

Publisher: **China Children's Press & Publication Group**
Contact name: Jing Yang, Foreign Rights Manager
Email: yangjing@ccppg.com.cn
Website: <http://www.ccppg.com.cn>

Publisher: **Ella Books**
Contact name: David Zhou
Email: ellabook@ellabook.cn
Website: www.ellebook.cn

Publisher: **Flower City Publishing House**
Contact name: Weiting Liu, Rights Editor
Email: 33732228@qq.com

Publisher: **Foreign Language Teaching and Research Publishing Co. Ltd.**
Contact name: Li Dan, Rights Manager
Email: lidan2015@fltrp.com
Website: <http://www.fltrp.com>

Publisher: **Hangzhou Le Du Culture Creativity Co. Ltd.**
Contact name: Xiaoglu Wang, Director
Email: hzwx1001@qq.com

Publisher: **Hangzhou Unicorn Culture Creativity Co. Ltd.**
Zhejiang Juvenile & Children's Publishing House
Contact name: Ningli Dong, Director; Ying Wu, Editor
Email: 601129991@qq.com

Publisher: **Hebei Children's Publishing House**
Contact name: Avril Liang
Email: hbser@163.com

Publisher: **The Magic Elephant Books**
Contact name: Yuan Xie, Rights Manager
Email: xieyuan@bbtpress.com

Publisher: **Nanjing University Press**
Contact name: Lei Shi, Editor-in-Chief
Email: 412012796@qq.com

Publisher: **New Buds Publishing House (Tianjin) Limited Company**
Contact name: Joyce Lee
Email: lilin_newbuds@126.com
Website: <http://www.newbuds.cn>

Publisher: **Qingdao Publishing House**
Contact name: Qianqian Liu, Children's Book Editor
Email: 250269799@qq.com
Website: <http://www.qdpub.com>

Publisher: **Ronshin Group**
Contact name: Cui Shuang, Foreign Rights Specialist
Email: shannon.cui@lelequ.com
Website: www.lelequ.com

Publisher: **Shanghai Dook Publishing Co. Ltd.**
Contact name: Zhe Zhang, Children's Book Manager; Wei Xu Editor
Email: xuwei@dookbook.com

Publisher: **ShangTong Books**
Contact name: Zijun Ma, Right's Manager
Email: mzj@21stmedia.com.cn
Website: www.shangtongbooks.com

Publisher: **Sichuan Children's Publishing House**
Contact name: Lingyu Ren, Rights Manager
Email: renlingyu12345@163.com
Website: www.sccph.com.cn

Publisher: **Sunnbook Culture & Arts Co. Ltd.**
Contact name: Xiangya Liu, President
Email: milan1102@126.com

Publisher: **Xinjiang Juvenile Publishing House**
Contact name: Cecilia Xi, Rights Editor
Email: 15811573539@vip.163.com
Website: <http://www.qingshao.net>

Publisher: **Zhejiang Fine Arts Publishing House**
Contact name: Chaoqe Chu, Art Director
Email: 36812140@QQ.com
Website: www.mss.zjcb.com

Publisher: **Zhejiang People's Publishing House**

Contact name: Mingfeng Li, Editor

Email: limingfeng0125@163.com

Publisher: **Zhejiang University Press Qi Zhen Children's book**

Contact name: Jing Ping, President

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