

the opportunities and historical responsibilities of libraries. The talk compared traditional chains and new models of academic publishing and looked at the role of libraries as both direct participants and indirect service providers.

Head Librarian Lecher's talk, entitled "Heidelberg University East Asian Library," introduced the history of East Asian studies at Heidelberg University, including the Center for East Asian Studies, Asia and Europe in a Global Context: The Asymmetry of Cultural Flow, East Asian Library, and Center for Asian and Transcultural Studies.

■ *Professional Development and On-the-job Training for Librarians*

In this age of endless technological and information change, library and information service specialists must continually improve their professional know-how in order to keep up with the times and with increasingly diverse reader needs. In light of this, and in an attempt to increase the professional acumen and service capabilities of librarians, the NCL developed courses on "Promoting Reading in the Digital Age," "Libraries and Youth Services," "Using Statistics to Improve Library Services," "The Digital Learning Train," and "Improving Organizational Management Quality Standards" in 2013. These courses addressed different professional development needs and job duties of librarians serving in public, high school, vocational school, and university libraries.

Courses were held all over the country—in northern, central, southern, and eastern Taiwan—through the joint help of public and university libraries. The courses broke with the traditional lecture approach, and used talks, discussions, group research, application, and objective-oriented learning, depending on the nature of the topic. Participants were thus able to acquire new knowledge, explore issues, and learn problem-solving skills. In total, 17 sessions were held, with over 1,000 librarians attending.



The Professional Development and On-the-job Training Course.

Also, in light of the fact that professional certification for libraries has been in use for some time in other countries, and that no such certification system exists yet in Taiwan, the NCL began to formulate professional standards for public librarians to improve the professional image of librarians in 2013. The result is a report entitled "Initial Draft of Professional Competencies for Public Library Workers in Taiwan."

■ *Library Assessments Show New Heights in Pursuit of Excellence*

In 2013, the NCL began implementation of its National Public Library Assessment plan by organizing an assessment committee and revising assessment criteria and methods. Initial assessments and follow up assessments were then conducted. A total of 502 city, county, and township libraries and branches were assessed.

NCL's Director General Tseng, who is also the national public library assessment committee head, stated that public library assessment primarily aims to provide understanding of current developments and issues with public libraries. Establishing assessment criteria will guide the direction of public library operations, leading to an emphasis on service quality and improvement.

Assessing Taiwan public libraries' operations, services, and achievements is done based on "Standards for Establishing and Running Public Libraries." The assessment process is divided

into two parts: self-assessment and initial outside assessment. Five major criteria are looked at, including Basic Facilities and Services, Operation Plan, Library Resource Management, Reader Services, and Promoting Services and Public Relations. The self-assessment looks at a library's operational conditions, while the initial assessment done by a group of scholars looks at a library's operational efficiency.



Posters of Library of the Year

Awards for top-performing libraries were also outlined, including (1) libraries that have high grades on effectiveness of library operations, followed by re-assessment by the national assessment committee are designated as Outstanding Libraries; (2) a Library of the Year Award is presented to those libraries that have exceptional results in the following five categories: Basic Facilities and Services, Operation Plan, Library Resource Management, Reader Services, and Promoting Services and Public Relations; (3) libraries that make unique contributions in the following areas are awarded a Unique Library Award: innovative services, building space, quality management, reading promotion, digital services, library resources, reader services, and community involvement.

The results showed that 190 libraries received “Outstanding Library” ratings, with 10 being selected as Library of the Year and 19 receiving the Unique Library Award. The NCL held a 2013 award ceremony “Lighthouses Navigating

Happiness in a Sea of Books” on December 30 to announce the results of the assessment and to issue awards and commendations.

■ *2013 Taiwan Reading Festival : Reading Makes You Soar*

The Taiwan Reading Festival is a unique celebration that began in 2013. It was held with activities and events held all around the country and publishers, bookstores, libraries, and public and private entities joining in. It encouraged the public to establish the three golden rules of books: buy books, read books, and share books. Several events were held, including “100 Great Reads, As Recommended by Famous People,” “Reading Is Awesome,” and “Let Books Float; Soar with Books,” which gave life to another wave of reading in Taiwan.

NCL's Director General Tseng stated that Taiwan Reading Festival is something unique to Taiwan. Its purpose is to increase more people's passion for reading, to find joy in books and reading, and to create a unique brand for Taiwan that can be shared with other countries, so that these countries can see a new powerful side of Taiwan.



Director General Tseng photographed with the children in the event.

For “100 Great Reads, As Recommended by Famous People,” the Minister of Education, the president of the Central Bank, wowprime's chairman, the mayor of Taichung, several county