

# National Central Library

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## Spotlights

### Taiwan Reading Festival Achieves International Renown: Taiwan Reading Festival Awarded an American Library Association Presidential Citation for Innovative International Library Projects for 2020

Beginning in 2013, the Ministry of Education has invited National Central Library and other public libraries to co-host the Taiwan Reading Festival. For 2020, National Central Library decided on the theme “Igniting the Public’s Passion for Reading” for its submission for the 2020 American Library Association Presidential Citation for Innovative International Library Projects. ALA notified NCL that were one of only four recipients this year. Due to the pandemic, the annual meeting and accompanying award ceremony originally scheduled for the end of June was canceled and an article in the July issue of American Libraries Magazine was arranged as a replacement.

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The screenshot shows the top of an American Libraries Magazine article. The title is "International Innovators" and the sub-headline is "ALA Presidential Citations honor forward-thinking global libraries". The author is "By Phil Morehart | July 1, 2020". The main image is a photograph of a group of people at the Taiwan Reading Festival, some wearing large inflatable costumes. To the right of the article is a sidebar with "Latest Library Links" and "AL Live" sections.

The Taiwan Reading Festival.  
 Photo: National Central Library in Taipei City, Taiwan

Four libraries earned this year’s American Library Association (ALA) Presidential Citation for Innovative International Library Projects. Their projects included smartphone training for seniors, multicultural events, a country-wide reading festival, and programming to raise awareness of Indigenous populations and their perspectives and needs.

*Award news of NCL is reported in the July issue of American Libraries Magazine, 2020.*

Receiving this award highlights the fact that Taiwan places high importance on public reading ability and competitiveness. Reading promotion is one of its important policies. Through continual innovation and policy formation, erstwhile bringing together the power of government and the people, the influential reading brand “Taiwan Reading Festival” was created. At the same time, the award shines a light on the

progressive power of Taiwan libraries, especially their passion in cross-discipline involvement in reading promotion. Such an achievement is worth letting the international community know so that each country can see a different kind of Taiwan power through the Taiwan Reading Festival.



*The Taiwan Reading Festival is awarded the American Library Association (ALA) Presidential Citation for Innovative International Library Projects for 2020.*

“Reading ability determines individual competitiveness and is closely tied with national competitiveness.” In an effort to create a local reading brand and related activities, each December the Taiwan Reading Festival holds over one hundred variegated reading events. These events help the public cultivate outstanding reading habits. The Reading Festival is one such event hosted by National Central Library. NCL, the two other national libraries, and the 22 municipal and county libraries function as development hubs, inviting over one hundred schools, publishers, cultural and educational institutions, and book clubs to function as collaborating partners in promoting a series of reading events. For example, in 2013 the initiative was “Buy Books, Sell Books, Give Books as Gifts,” which proved to increase public awareness of the importance of reading. From 2014 to 2016 a Reading Festival was held to get the public outside to see libraries. From 2017 to 2019 the venue was moved to Daan Forest Park where book knowledge and the park’s ecosystem could be combined into

reading events. Each year the events get better and better while expanding levels of participation, so that all ages and all strata of society can feel the charm of reading and enjoy the pleasure of reading.

The Ministry of Education expressed thanks to National Central Library for leading municipal and county libraries throughout Taiwan in continuously planting the seeds of education and reading by executing the MOE’s projects for public libraries; for actively guiding libraries throughout the island in expanding their holdings; for improving service quality and promoting reading; and for holding workshops, training courses, and share meetings. Last year (2019) the number of times people in Taiwan visited libraries exceeded 100 million for the first time (a 24.82% increase); the number of people borrowing books rose to 22.95 million (a 5.90% increase); and the number of volumes borrowed reached 81.3 million (a 4.35% increase). These figures represent strong growth over 2018. Future reading promotion will see new forms and ways, working with other industries and disciplines to continue to ignite the public’s passion for reading.



*2018 Taiwan Reading Festival opening ceremony.*

ALA was founded in 1876. Headquartered in Chicago, it is one of the oldest and largest library association in the world. The Presidential Citation for Innovative International Library Projects began in 2008 to encourage international libraries to pursue innovation. Awardees are chosen by the International Relations Round Table (IRRT) Committee. Two of the primary considerations



are that the project can continue indefinitely and that it can be a model for other libraries. National Central Library previously received this citation in 2011 and 2015 for its projects “E-Publication Platform System” and “Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies” (set up around the globe), respectively. This year marks the third year of receiving a presidential citation. It is clear that with encouragement and integration from the Ministry of Education, libraries throughout Taiwan have endless creative energy in driving collaboration development between libraries in Taiwan and increased public reading habits.



*Various dignitaries participate in the opening ceremony of the 2019 Taiwan Reading Festival.*

## ■ Rare German Books Are Given to the National Central Library

National Central Library has received another wonderful donation! This lot of rare German books contain 12 titles (69 volumes) published between the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They are all classic works from famed German authors, including Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, Heinrich Heine, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Eduard Mörike, and Gottfried Keller. The donation was by the well-known translator Günter Whittome and his wife, Professor Sheng-Ching Chang from Fu Jen Catholic University. National Central Library held a donation ceremony on May 29<sup>th</sup> to express its thanks. The largest set is Schiller’s Complete

Works, numbering 17 volumes. The next largest are Goethe’s numbering 10, Keller’s numbering 8, and Heinrich’s numbering 5. They are all very exquisite.

Günter Whittome is was born in England but grew up in Germany. The books donated were purchased by his father in West Berlin, which was controlled by the US, France, and England at the end of World War II. At the time, Whittome’s father was in the British army and was a gifted polyglot, teaching German, English, and French.



*NCL Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng expresses her thanks for the donation.*

National Central Library Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng stated, NCL has in its collection around 5,000 old books from the West that were published over 100 years ago. This is an important collection for Taiwan, with part coming from older collections and a large part coming from Li Shizeng, one of the early leaders of the Republic. Li established the Sino-International Library in Geneva in the 1930s. In the 1950s, the library’s holdings were transferred to Uruguay. It was not until the 1990s that they were transferred back to the NCL in Taiwan. Many wonderful old books were part of the collection. Also, not too long ago the collector Cheng Ding Tang deposited a collection of old books at NCL, all of which were rare copies of books from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

During the donation ceremony, Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng especially expressed her