

# National Central Library

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## Spotlights

### ■ NCL's 40 Years Efforts in Chinese Studies Have Carried out Profound Accomplishment: The Center for Chinese Studies Holds Anniversary Celebration and Academic Forum

National Central Library's Center for Chinese Studies was established in 1981. As of September of this year, it has been in operation for 40 years! To honor the efforts of those pioneers, both in Taiwan and abroad, as well as take the opportunity to highlight the achievements and vision of National Central Library's continued promotion of Chinese studies and to maintain and solidify the achievements in Taiwan's momentum in international scholarly exchange, a series of activities were held, including a celebration, lectures, academic forum, a donation ceremony of *Song* history research manuscripts and resources, and a plaque unveiling for launching the *Song* History Research Material Archive Area, in addition, a themed exhibition to celebrate the Center for Chinese Studies' 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



*Plaque unveiling for launching the Song History Research Material Archive Area at the 40th anniversary celebration of the Center for Chinese Studies.*

The Center for Chinese Studies 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration and the "Cultivation and Growth: Retrospect and Prospect of 40 Years of Chinese Studies in Taiwan academic forum" were held on September 30 and October 1 at National Central Library. During the anniversary celebration arrangements were made for a launching ceremony for the "Amazing Vista, Tranquil Mind: *Song* History Research Material Archive Area." Administrative Deputy Minister of Education Teng-chiao Lin, Vice President of Academia Sinica Chin-Shing Huang, and NCL Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng accompanied the book donor Professor The-yi Wang's wife, Kuo-jui Sun and Professor Kuan-chung Huang jointly unveiled the plaque. This was done to honor scholars who had been making efforts to collect and take care of their collections through their life and finally generously contributed their precious collection to the Library for the common's good.

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## Renowned *Song* History Research Professor The-yi Wang Donated His Book Collection to Benefit the Scholarly World

Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng stated, this donation comes from an internationally acclaimed scholar on *Song* history, The-yi Wang, Professor Emeritus from the Department of History at National Taiwan University. He is originally from Feng County in Jiangsu. He grew up during the chaos of war, came to Taiwan as an exiled student, enrolled in National Taiwan University's Department of History where he completed his studies. After graduation, he worked for a time in NCL's Special Collections Division that used to be at the Beigou Offices. In doing researches, he always strived to be careful and precise, and focused his researches on *Song* history. He takes teaching and researching as his life career. Even after retirement, he still continued such efforts. He was both industrious and frugal in raising a family, and had no other interests besides research, teaching, writing books, and buying books. During his career he has trained great number of talented students. He spent almost his entire life time in writing and publishing life chronicles and biographies of important historical figures, doing name authority investigations and compiling name indices. Because of these he was very well respected in Chinese studies circles across the globe. This donation from Professor Wang was facilitated by Professor Kuan-chung Huang, also, because many visits from Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng and library staff that they found out many of the reprinted ancient books in Taiwan were possible due to Professor Wang's instrumental role. A lot of his salary were spent in buying books and providing them to students to use.

According to a very preliminary estimation, Professor The-Yi Wang's collection contains more than 60,000 volumes, many of which are with hand-written notes and annotations, which became the fundamental information or clues he used to compile subject-oriented indices. These were also important notes of his researches. In addition to donating books, he donated a card catalog cabinet, stamps and cards for indexing reference works, and a Liberty mimeograph tool from the 1960s. He also has preserved correspondences with important history scholars and literati over a fifty-year period, such as Congwu Yao, Hao Fang, Jialuo Yang, Tieh-han Chao, Tzu-chien Liu, and Yoshinobu Shiba. The materials

in his donation shows his relentless researches and writings just never stopped. There is another level of significance with this donation. In 1958, former Director-General Chiang Fu-tsung and others set up a "*Song* History Symposium," a regular discussion and research meeting activity, in the former National Central Library's old library facilities located at Nan-Hai Road. Although it was not a formal affiliated organization of the Library, it set an office within the library until 1987. Artifacts, historical materials, and meeting minutes, etc. in the donated collection all testifying that NCL has long been deeply influencing the development of Chinese studies. All the donated materials, including artifacts, manuscripts, books are all invaluable resources for scholars to do researches on previous scholars' thoughts. This thematic collection will surely benefit *Sung* history researches.

Director-General Tseng visited Professor Wang and his wife in May before the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in Taiwan. At the time, Professor The-yi Wang was in good spirits and gave library staff a tour of his collection. After the visit, his two sons came back to Taiwan from the U.S. to help putting his books in order. In addition, many of his students who are now retired professors also helped with organizing his manuscripts. However, unexpectedly, his health is not as good now, so he asked his wife, Ms. Kuo-jui Sun to represent him at the donation ceremony. The donated books would be cataloged and input to the NCL catalog so that they will be searchable and available at the "A Vista of Scholarly Assets: *Song* History Research Material Archive Area" for public use. Director-General Tseng stated that the NCL would continue to acquire materials on this domain so that the Library could provide even more abundant of research resources to researchers.

## A Review of 40 Years of Chinese Studies in Taiwan and Future Prospects: A Celebration and An Academic Forum Were Held

Two lectures were held as part of the Center for Chinese Studies 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. The invited lecturers were Professor Peter K. Bol from Harvard University and Professor Rur-bin Yang from Tsing-hua University. Both are important international scholars in Chinese studies. They shared their long-term observations about international exchanges in Chinese studies and state of the art of Taiwan's Chinese

studies. In addition, a one-and-half day academic forum was held which was entitled “Cultivation and Growth: Retrospect and Prospect of 40 Years of Chinese Studies in Taiwan. Invited speakers were important scholars and experts in Taiwan who collectively illustrated a retrospective overview of and future prospective for Chinese studies. The forum included eight lecture sessions covering a wide range of topics: classical studies, unearthed relics and philology, linguistics, classical literature, modern and contemporary literature, Taiwan literature, Taiwan history, *Ming-Qing* social history, intellectual history, gender history, medical and health history, art history, the pre-*Qin* masters, *Song-Ming* Confucianism studies, Buddhism studies, Daoism and folk religions, anthropology, and international Chinese studies.

### **NCL Cultivates and Promotes Chinese Studies in Taiwan**

Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng stated that now Chinese studies has incorporated more of Taiwan’s local characteristics compared to the past, creating core cultural values that are unique on the international stage. In the past 40 years, NCL has been making all possible efforts to facilitate Chinese studies, including: acquisition and preservation of Chinese materials, conservation and promotion of special collections, international collaboration and publication exchanges, digitization of important materials, development of digital humanities applications, publishing Chinese studies publications, thematic exhibitions of NCL special collections, scholarship grants sponsoring for foreign scholars to do researches in Taiwan, etc., aiming to encourage researches and various kinds of scholarly communications. All of these have profound influences supporting a sound and more open environment for Chinese studies in Taiwan which has been well recognized as a remarkable Sinology research base in the world.

In the last ten years, NCL has also made efforts in establishing ‘Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies’(TRCCS) overseas to establish collaboration relationship with libraries and institutions. Through 37 TRCCS as well as hundreds of exchange partners, it has continued to promote Taiwan’s Chinese studies and other research resources to countries

in the world. In particular, since 1989 grants have been awarded to 522 foreign scholars from more than 44 countries to come to Taiwan to conduct research in topics concerning Chinese studies. Many of the scholars are now famed scholars at important Chinese research institutions overseas. The NCL’s professional information services, academic freedom in Taiwan society, the importance placed on culture by Taiwanese, and the open accessibility of government documents and research materials, etc. are recognized and well appreciated by the scholars. Through this, Taiwan is honored for not only standing on the frontlines of promoting Chinese studies and protecting cultural values, but also for being an important ‘fortress’ for academic freedom in the world.

Authors, including Academician Fan-sen Wang, also expressed their concerns, made warning of the looming crisis in Chinese studies in Taiwan and called for the government and academia to pay attention: students in the disciplines such as literature, history, and philosophy are weak in research capability, the number of Taiwan students studying overseas is decreasing which will cause crisis to Taiwan’s internationalization, the cultivation of researchers and mentors is far behind, young scholars do not have a clear professional path forward, few avenues exist for scholars to publish their research outcomes, organization of basic research resources and historical documents are in need of continuous support, besides, open access and the development of digital database, etc. are all important issues. They suggested that the government should give these issues serious consideration so as to retain Taiwan’s leadership role in Sinology researches.



*A group photo of the dignitaries attending the launching ceremony.*