

for Public Libraries and the National Libraries in Taiwan to Promote Reading” during the session.

In addition, the National Central Library participated in ALA’s poster session, with a theme of “The 100th Year of the Republic: A Classic Time for Reading — 108 Organizations Promoted Reading Chinese Ancient Classics.” Director-general Tseng was at the booth, explaining the content to visitors and engaging in in-depth interaction and exchange. Former ALA President Barbara J. Ford personally attended NCL’s booth and extended her encouragement. Ms. Ford has visited NCL in the past.

■ **National Central Library donated books to Rice University to deepen academic exchange**

On the 21st of June 2012, the National Central Library donated to Rice University, commonly known as the Harvard of the South, a number of important Taiwan published Chinese Studies research materials. May this gesture deepen bilateral academic exchange.

The titles of the books donated include “Taiwan Contemporary Writers Research Materials Collection,” “Selected Anthology of Taiwan Poets,” “Republic of China-Post War Era Taiwan Data Compilation: Politics series” and “Privately Owned Republic of China-Post War Era Taiwan Data Collection (politics series, a sequel),” “Taiwan Religions Collection, 1st Series” and “Taiwan Religions Collection: 2nd series.” All in all, there were 200 volumes of 6 categories.



Left to right: Sara Lowman, University Librarian, Fondren Library, Dr. Tani Barlow, Director, Chao Center for Asian Studies, Tseng Shu hsien, Director-general, National Central Library, Dr. George L. McLendon, Howard R. Hughes Provost of Rice University, Representative Liao Dong-zhou, Taipei Economic & Cultural Office in Houston, Wu Shao-fen, Head, Cultural Division, Taipei Economic & Cultural Office in Houston.

Events

■ **National Central Library Enlivens Taiwan Academies in U.S.: Unraveling I Ching, Enriching References, and Drinking Tea**

To promote the services of the Resource Points in Taiwan Academies and to bring about cultural exchange and scholarly discourse, at the end of June, Director-general of the National Central Library Tseng Shu hsien led a group of library personnel to three Taiwan Academies in the U.S.. The purpose of the trip was to hold “Erudition: An Exhibition on Reading the Ancient Aesthetics of Living,” which will be comprised of lectures on the Book of Changes, an exhibition of ancient Chinese books, and tea sipping activities.

Director-general Tseng stated, the Book of Changes has influenced Chinese intellectual culture for more than 4,000 years. While seemingly abstruse at first glance, it is replete with philosophy that the past generations have put into practice in

their lives. The National Central Library has invited funding chairman of the Taiwan Research Institute of *I Ching*, Chun-tsu Liu, to go to the U.S. to speak on “Boundless in Movement in accord with Time — Chinese Culture Transmission in 21st Century from the Perspective of *I Ching*.”



Mr. Chun-Tsu Liu’s speech from the perspective of *I Ching*

In addition to hosting a lecture on the Book of Changes, National Central Library also hosted an exhibition titled “Erudition: An Exhibition on Reading the Ancient Aesthetics of Living” at three of the Taiwan Academies. On display will be a selection of ancient books published in the *Song*, *Yuan*, *Ming*, and *Qing* dynasties. Content includes leisure life of the literati, dramatic literature, conceptions of health, and observing Nature.

These collections have always been held in high esteem by the international academic community for both the quality and quantity of their documents. They are regarded not only as one of Taiwan’s treasured resources, but also as an important asset for the research of human knowledge.

In order to attract overseas Chinese and foreign friends, enabling an even greater number of interested readers to investigate traditional Chinese

culture and literary works through the National Central Library’s rich collection, the exhibition is divided into four main themes: Leisure Life of the Literati; Dramatic Literature; Conceptions of Health; and Observing Nature.

Besides reprinting ancient books in the Library’s collection relating to these themes, alongside these, this exhibition places related modern Taiwanese publications and some of the fruits of its rare book digitization projects. Reading ancient books is not just a way to get into investigating the classics, it is also a shortcut linking the aesthetics of living of ancient and modern people; in re-examining how this small group of literati blended their personal tastes with their everyday lives, this exhibition also demonstrates the ancients’ emphasis on culture, veneration of nature, and valuing of life.

The exhibition was at the Taiwan Academies in New York, Houston, and Los Angeles during the following times:

New York: June 19 to July 18, Mondays to Fridays 9:00-16:30

Houston: June 21 to July 22, Tuesdays to Sundays 9:30-17:30

Los Angeles: June 24 to July 22, Tuesdays to Sundays 10:00-18:00

To literally feast the overseas Chinese, foreign friends, and allow more interesting readers to explore Chinese culture and classics by way of the abundant collections at the NCL, the exhibit was therefore extended for a period of one month from its grand opening. The exhibit contained four content areas: Human Elegance and Interest, Drama and Literature, Keeping Good Health in Good State, and the Nature and Observation.



The exhibit of ancient classics in the activity of Reading the Beauty of the Life of Chinese Ancient People (pictured from Culture and Economic Center in Houston).

On the first day of the exhibition, National Central Library hosted a tea reception, replete with tea and delicacies imported from Taiwan. All of the senses were stimulated as attendees savor the tea, an activity that ancient Chinese were quite fond of. Guides were also on hand to explain the details of each exhibit.

“The Exhibit of Chinese Ancient Classics” in the Chinese Studies Library at Taiwan Academy presented again the duplicate copies of the related subject classics collections owned by NCL, as well as the related contemporary publications in print and the digitization of classics in Taiwan.

Tea tasting has resulted in the high light of activity as expected. In regard to elaborating tea quality, water quality, utensils, and good mood, drinking tea is no longer considered to merely quench the thirst any more; rather, it’s an artistic taste of our life and an utmost pursuit of the beauty of life. To enhance the interests in drinking tea, NCL prepared in particular, the commemorative tea cup filled with tea leaves and printed with the NCL-owned flower and bird pictures from its classics collections, together with

the persimmon-shaped cutting on the Taiwanese Hakka calio, as two gifts to give away to visiting audiences. By the way, the Chinese pronunciation of persimmon is fortunately happened in literal accordance with the meaning “everything turns out as one wishes.”

With the assistance from the foreign representatives and the staff at the NCL, the planning and operation of this series of activity and the related extension and marketing programs have all come to a happy and satisfactory close. This is further testified by the attending audiences who have fully occupied the rooms in each session of activity. For further details, please visit the following web address: <http://goo.gl/gznSD>



■ ***The Beauty of the NCL Photographed by the Master***

The “Libraries: Photographs by Massimo Listri” is the exhibit that the Italian photography Master Massimo Listri presented at the NCL in the beginning of 2012. Before his departure from Taiwan, Master Listri took a special trip to the NCL, found a good view of shooting, and finished this masterpiece. From the constructional viewpoint of this photo, there are two large visual

parts, i.e., the horizontal “books” at the bottom, and the “window sills” in square pieces in the middle. There are also two smaller objects that are vertical “book shelves” that stand between two main parts and the “courtyard” that is on the top of the photo.

The two large visual “books” and “window sills” have clearly presented the image of an oriental library. Massimo focused his photograph on the horizontal “books” at the bottom. This is the highlight of the picture with its intention to indicate that the location of the shooting is in the library. For the part of “window sills,” Master Listri has unintentionally revealed the imagination of a Western artist about the Oriental world. The combination of two simple elements has clearly shown that this picture of a library was taken in the Oriental society. Obviously, this is a sharp contrast with what Massimo have photographed of the most Western libraries.

Look at the lattices of book shelves at the bottom of photo and the lattices of window sills on the wall, there is a nearly perfect of mutual relationship and harmoniously reflection with each other. In addition, there is an interesting image that all small lattices have inserted in the large lattices and that happens in book shelves and in window sills as well.

The “oblique lines” shown on book shelves and on courtyard have made the photo neither too dull nor losing its symmetry. Furthermore, the dark “books” at the bottom seems very solemn, the “window sills” in the middle shows warm color, and all extends the color to the natural, bright sunlight from the courtyard on top. All this color changes have made the photograph feel calm and warm.



Rare Books Room at the NCL photographed by the Italian photographer Massimo Listri.

Numerous lattices and lines have arranged in such a perfect and neat symmetry that seems to present the calm atmosphere of the library and the good order of the Oriental society. The structure of “courtyard” and “window sills” on the upper part of the photo consists of eight lattices each, while the vertical and horizontal book shelves on the lower are made of seven lattices in neat cutting.

Taking a closer look, numerous lines and lattices, either vertically or horizontally presented from the “courtyard,” “window sills,” “book shelves,” and “books,” neatness, symmetry, and the harmony of lines and lattices have all produced the calm atmosphere when one is reading in the library, as well as the sense of order in the Oriental society in which we live. When comparing with the variations of several thousand years of human history and knowledge deposited in the NCL special collections, the differentia of atmosphere and variations have sharply revealed the character of calmness and order in this photograph.