

Events

■ NCL and Two World-class University Libraries Form Collaborative Relationship: The Digitization of Ancient Chinese Books for All to Enjoy

A new chapter has been written in NCL's collaborative efforts to digitize ancient Chinese books abroad. In 2021, National Central Library collaborated with Stanford University Libraries and Oxford University's Bodleian Library to digitize the ancient Chinese books in their collection. From collaborations with these two libraries, more than 30,000 images were produced.

NCL Director-General Tseng stated, NCL's Six Visions and Twelve Strategies clearly outline that international exchange and collaboration are one of the most important policies of NCL and are the basis by which they push forward related endeavors. With the aim to enrich the Chinese studies resources for Taiwan and the world, and to regain access to the rare and ancient Chinese books that now only exist overseas, NCL has been actively sought to collaborate with overseas institutions and establish a mutually beneficial model with foreign libraries. It is our hope that the precious ancient Chinese books that are in other countries can be utilized by the scholarly communities in Taiwan and the world, therefore, the NCL has been endeavoring to acquire digital images of such books to include in the NCL's digital collection. The books digitized through such collaboration will regain visibility and become usable from the accessibility enabled by the NCL databases.

In 2005, the first collaborative digitization project began with the Library of Congress. NCL has been continuously collaborating with libraries with important Chinese rare books ever since. Collaborative partners include the University of Washington Library, UC Berkeley's C.V. Starr East Asian Library, Princeton University Library, University of Toronto Library, University of British Columbia Library, François-Mitterrand Library, and some other renowned institutions. Last year's international collaboration partners include Stanford University Library and Oxford University Library. Stanford University Library's ancient Chinese book collection is quite

massive. This digitization project focused on the classics, history, philosophy, literature, and collectanea. There are also geography and political books. Oxford University's library has a few books that are the only extant copies in the world, including *Xu Wending gong Shijing chuangao in 4 juan*. It also has several hundred volumes of rare Daoist manuscript from the Yao people. So far researches on the Yao people is limited due to lack of materials, the great number of digitized books will greatly reinforce resources for the study of Daoism and the Yao people.

On January 5, 2022, Stanford University Library announced that the collaboration project had been completed. It also stated that the rare books digitized through collaboration project with NCL will be incredibly beneficial for scholars who are doing researches on Ming and Qing scholarship, literature, and history. On July 13, 2021, the article that the library published also positively valued the NCL's collaborative digitization project for the high-quality images produced, and for the systematic means implemented in collecting great number of images of Chinese rare books that are existing at different places in the world and now provide openly for the public to use, and emphasized that this will highly benefit Chinese studies.

Director-General Tseng stated that since beginning of such international collaborative digitization projects for Chinese rare books, up to now the NCL has completed the digitization of more than 4,700 titles of important rare books which has carried out nearly 3.2 million images. During the pandemic times, in-person activities are restricted, electronic resources accessible through Internet are of great importance for both education and research. The international collaborative digitization achievements of NCL help users and scholars both in Taiwan and abroad to sidestep the constraints of space and time to search and access the images of the Chinese rare books that existing at different places. Once the images from Stanford University Library and Oxford University Library have been done necessary processing, they will be uploaded to the Ancient Books and Special Collections Resource System that NCL constructed (<http://rbook.ncl.edu.tw/NCLSearch>). The digitization outcomes from each year's digitization projects would be uploaded to the database so as to fulfill the commitment of the collaborative program and the associated database.



On January 1, 2022, Stanford University Library announces its collaboration with NCL was completed.



The Ancient Books and Special Collections Resource System provides search and browsing functionalities to the public and scholars.

■ Professor Ken-yao Liang Donates Their Family Collection and Manuscripts, Benefiting Everyone and Enriching NCL's Collection

On January 13, 2022, National Central Library was notified of Prof. Ken-yao Liang, Ken-yin Liang, and Ken-chen Liang's intention of donating their family collection and manuscripts to NCL, with the good motivation to benefit everyone and enrich NCL's collections. Moreover, the public would also be possible to use the resources.

NCL Director-General Tseng stated that for many years NCL has been striving to have diversified collaborations and exchanges with scholarly institutions, and to acquire scholars' collections, materials, letters, and manuscripts as possible. Prof. Ken-yao Liang is a famous historian in Taiwan. His research area was centered on the *Song* dynasty, but extended to *Tang* and

Song socioeconomic history, *Song* and *Yuan* education and cultural history, and the study of modern Chinese socioeconomic history. He is such an important scholar that his personal collection is among the targets that NCL wanted to acquire earnestly. This donation includes more than 10,000 items (including books and manuscripts) collected by two generations from his parents, Prof. Chao-kang Liang and Prof. Pei-chiung Chung. Major themes include philosophy and education. Many are publications from China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong before 1949. Of these, the rarest and most valuable ones are the handwritten teaching materials left behind by his parents that they wrote when they were teaching, personal letters of the family, and Chao-kang's handwritten master's thesis from the time when he was in the education department at National Sun Yat-sen University. Chao-kang and his wife resettled from Hong Kong to Taiwan. Although they moved many times and despite that the books and manuscripts have existed for a long time, they are well preserved and still in good condition. It is apparent that this family of professors treasures and adores books, something worthy of emulation from later generations.

On the day Director-General Tseng pay a visit to Prof. Liang's residence, Prof. Liang signed a "Letter of Intent to Donate Books and Manuscripts to National Central Library." Director-General Tseng stated that this is not an ordinary donation. Books with historical significance might be scattered or even destroyed if not conscientiously cared and preserved. That this family of professors is willing to donate their collection to NCL will ensure that these books and manuscripts will be well preserved and continue to benefit scholarly communities for generations.



Prof. Ken-yao Liang's family donate their family's collection and manuscripts.