

Since 2020, the pandemic has ravaged the human society. It well bears the title of the worst catastrophe the world has known in this century. For both individuals and societies, people have been internally and externally shaken and left on tenterhooks. As is well known, the role of libraries in the progress of society is one of unshakable existence. Therefore, when the pandemic spread and caused lock down in countries, libraries were expected to continue to facilitate research, teaching, and learning. Indeed, NCL has not been stopped by the pandemic, but rather has continued to use both on-site and online options to retain various reading promotion events, genuinely wishes to positively calm down people, and to help them finding their own sense of inner peace.

NCL selected September, that wonderful time when fall is in the air, to hold the exhibition “Materialism showed in the Dream of the Red Chamber (*Honglou Meng*)”: A Special Exhibition of Rare Books on *Honglou Meng*.” There were about 50 rare books in NCL’s collection that are on Dream of the Red Chamber (*Honglou Meng*) or that deal with Redology selected. They were divided into five main categories: characters in the novel, medicine, food and feasts, plants used as metaphors for emotions, and tools and implements. The aim was to create a shortcut for the public to engage in reading by helping them become familiar with different aspects of the novel to guide the study of this story. In addition to being able to appreciate Cao Xueqin’s material aesthetics that he spent much time crafting in the novel and rekindling a feeling for this classic, NCL wanted to help the public to become more literate and to nourish their mind and heart.



Dignitaries at the ribbon cutting for the exhibition “Materialism showed in the Dream of the Red Chamber (Honglou Meng)”: A Special Exhibition of Rare Books on Honglou Meng.”

NCL Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng stated, as one of the important repository for printed material, NCL has in its collection many ancient books on the Dream of the Red Chamber (*Honglou Meng*) and on Redology. This exhibition dovetails with our fall reading lecture on Dream of the Red Chamber (*Honglou Meng*) and highlights various people or things in the novel. On display are more than 50 rare books and items from NCL’s collection. These are of different genres, various writing styles, and represent variegated content, making them very much worth a look. In addition, the design of the exhibition space was aimed to produce a specific atmosphere by replicating Cao Xueqin’s “big showcase” of a land of immortals. So that while visitors were admiring the elegant ancient books, they could also have the feeling of wandering about gentrified courtyard of an aristocratic and literary family. Also, in conjunction with the five main themes of the exhibition and the fall season, a Lantern Festival riddle game and a bookmark making station were on hand so that visitors could experience and better understand abundance of wisdom found in the daily life described in this great classic work. Visitors could then have a sense of the magnificent spectacle and age that is in this book, as well as the insights and feelings it can awaken us from so long ago.



During an exhibition tour.

■ The 2022 Taiwan Public Library Benchmark Study Group Pays a Study Visit to Norway and Sweden Famed Libraries

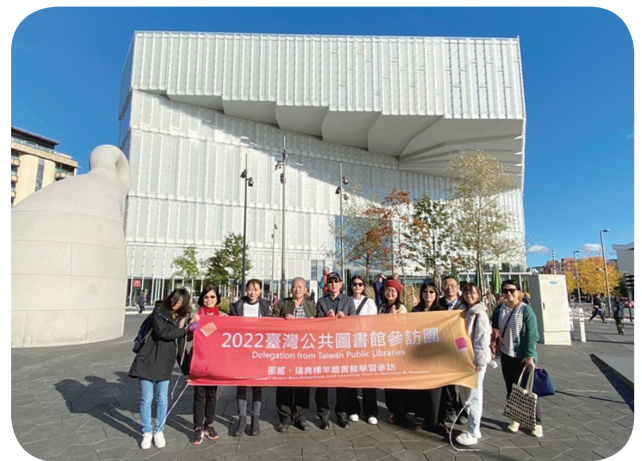
In order to enhance the services of libraries, the Ministry of Education takes a policy to expand the horizons of domestic public library service authorities and practitioners, and to increase understanding of the development of international libraries. The Ministry

of Education entrusted National Central Library to arrange the Taiwan Public Library Norway and Sweden Benchmark Library Visit. This activity was conducted from September 24th to October 1st, visiting the main library and branch libraries of the municipal libraries of Oslo, the capital of Norway, and the main library in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden. NCL Deputy Director-General Chih-Tsung Weng was designated as Dean of this public library study group. The members of the group include directors of the municipal city libraries and representatives of county and city cultural bureaus who have facilitated the construction plan for the new main library in recent years, directors of the county and city public library regional resource centers, representatives of the education and cultural bureaus, and representatives of the winners of the First Ministry of Education Library Service Contribution Award. A total of 11 representatives of public libraries participated in this delegation.

The first day of the trip involved a visit to the main library and distinctive branches of Oslo Public Library in Norway. The first stop was the Biblo Toyen Library, whose director, Reinert Mithassel, personally conducted a guided tour. Biblo Toyen Library primarily consists of two library buildings, one of which is an exclusive space for teenagers aged 10-15, while the other is for the general public to use freely. After the visit to Biblo Toyen Library, the second stop was the Grünerløkka Library, the oldest library in Norway. After its space revitalization and renovation of 2019, the interior furnishings and space planning dispensed with the old-fashioned, replacing it with rich colors and vitality, more in line with the needs and expectations of residents. The finale of the first day of the trip was a visit to the Deichman Bjørvika, the main library of Oslo Public Library, which won the International Federation of Library Associations' (IFLA) 2021 Public Library Award. Its white, neat and simple Nordic style complements the neighboring Oslo Opera House, and blends naturally with the Aker Brygge wharf. The library cost about 2.5 billion Norwegian Kroner and its design and construction took 11 years. It was finally opened on June 18, 2020, and became a new landmark in the capital city. In its first year it welcomed 1.2 million visitors. It is currently used by about 7,000 people daily.

The important aspects observed from the on-site tours of each benchmarking library include the flexible use of library space, ingenious interior design, library services design and resources deployment that reflects

people-oriented operational thinking, emphasis on the creation of connections between people, embracement of ideas in ensuring environmental sustainability and continual development, etc. The group members all treasure this rare opportunity, and interact actively with and seek help from the staff of the libraries. They were richly rewarded, profoundly encouraged, and much inspired, hoping to utilize their acquired knowledge in the practical operation of each of their libraries. With the knowledge and motivation, it is believed that the collective efforts by all members of the delegation will be influential to opening of a new page in the development of library services in Taiwan.



The 2022 Taiwan Public Library Benchmark Study Group makes a study visit to Norway and Sweden.



Members of the 2022 Taiwan Public Library Benchmark Study Group at Biblo Toyen Library.

■ National Central Library Holds Workshop for Young Sinologists

In order to help young scholars in the field of international sinology to realize the positive side and necessity of conducting research in Taiwan, and to become acquainted with Taiwan's academic resources, the National Central Library planned a workshop for young sinologists from September 29 to October 1, 2022. In addition to special lectures introducing the