

National Central Library

In this issue

Spotlights	1
Events	11
NCL Publications	16
Chinese Studies Symposium	18
News from Taiwan Libraries	19

Spotlights

■ Libraries in a Changing Century: International Symposium Celebrating Nine Decades of the National Central Library & Signing Ceremonies with the National Library of the Czech Republic and the British Library

The National Central Library celebrated its 90th anniversary this year, so on April 20, it held a celebration ceremony and an international symposium. The more than 200 attendees included President Ing-wen Tsai, Political Deputy Minister of Education Ming-yu Lin, the director generals or deputy director generals from national libraries in eight countries (England, the Czech Republic, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Singapore, Germany, and Canada), foreign ambassadors to Taiwan, scholars and librarians, as well as important people who have donated books and manuscripts. Together they witnessed the National Central Library's strong stride into 90 years and its new milestone of "A Library of Excellence, A Smart Taiwan."

During the festivities, NCL met with the National Library of the Czech Republic and signed a collaborative agreement that would strengthen our relationship in sharing professional staff, library resources, professional acumen, experience, and technology. NCL also signed an agreement with the British Library to work on digitizing ancient Chinese books in its collections, which will result in more replete digital content for ancient Chinese book resources.



The signing ceremony between NCL and the British Library.

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The signing ceremony between NCL and the National Library of the Czech Republic.

NCL hosted the International Symposium Celebrating Nine Decades of the National Central Library on April 20 and 21, 2023. Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng said during her remarks at the symposium that the worldwide pandemic presented libraries with an unprecedented challenge. However, crises are actually opportunities. International collaboration actually increased during the pandemic, and face-to-face interaction expanded to include virtual and online sharing. In addition to their traditional services, during the pandemic the innovative changes that libraries made were innumerable. This symposium celebrated the founding and development of NCL. It is hoped that NCL can share with the world the glory of Taiwan library development and sustainability. Furthermore, in a special response to the influence of the changing century on libraries, NCL arranged to have three keynote speeches and four sessions of presentations.



Director-General Tseng presenting her remarks.

In response to how changes in this century have affected libraries, three keynote speakers were arranged, as well as four sessions of presentations. The first keynote speaker was Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng; she spoke on Discovering New Value of Library: Aiming at Enduring Positive Input to the Human Society—Endeavors, Accomplishments, and Future Perspectives of the National Central Library.

She shared insights into NCL's long-term development, achievements, and future prospects. The second speech was by the Chief Executive of the British Library Sir Roly Keating, who spoke on the history of the British Library over the last 50 years and future prospects. The third speaker was the Library Association of the Republic of China (Taiwan) President Kuang-hua Chen. His remarks were titled A New Horizon of Academic Libraries. He explored academic libraries' efforts in developing data services and advanced analysis as a means to strengthen library function.

Presentations in the four sessions discussed current trends and innovation at libraries. CEOs, Director-Generals and Deputy-Director General from the British Library, National Libraries of Canada, Germany, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, and Singapore were invited to present, as well as Tamkang University Library Dean Sheue-fang Song, Bio-architecture Formosana's Principal Architect Ying-chao Kuo, and seven other scholars and experts. The topics of the International Symposium sessions were as follows: Covid Pandemic as the Gate to the New Library Services. Case Study of the National Library of the Czech Republic; The Obvious Has Become Obvious. Libraries after the Pandemic; Empowerment, Innovation and Sustainability: Library Transformation during Covid-19 Pandemic; Smart State Needs Smart Libraries: Designing Proactive Public Services in Estonia; The Concept of the National Library: Building a Knowledge Space that Creates Value; Transforming Singapore's Libraries and Archives through LAB25 (Libraries and Archives Blueprint 2025); Sustainability in the German National Library; Redesign Library under the Framework of SDGs; Transforming Access: Shifting the Focus from Preservation towards Access.

Arrangements were made during the tea and coffee breaks to provide foreign visitors with a chance to experience traditional tea culture, with the Chinese Tea Research Association holding a "tea-tasting cultural event." During the closing ceremony, video clips from the tea tasting were shown and were well-received by both Taiwanese and foreign attendees. NCL Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng expressed during the closing ceremony her thanks to the foreign and Taiwan scholars invited to attend, as well as librarians from Taiwan university libraries and public libraries. Because of everyone's participation, "Libraries

in a Changing Century: International Symposium Celebrating Nine Decades of the National Central Library” was a success. She also presented certificates of appreciation and gifts to the directors-general of national libraries from eight countries in Europe, Asia, and North America, thanking them for traveling great distances to add their well wishes to NCL’s 90th-anniversary celebration and for sharing their successes in library services and new findings in research. What they shared in the symposium was beneficial to all and a great example of international exchange.

The robust development of librarianship around the world, as well as innovative and sustainable service ideas, were on display in each session of the two-day conference. This provided the librarians, students, and scholars from Taiwan in attendance with wonderful learning opportunities. We believe that librarians of the future will not only dedicate themselves to their occupation but will also function as protectors, disseminators, and innovators of knowledge and culture. They will create a whole new vision for library services and together promote the continued development of human culture. They will also disseminate scholarly research internationally and increase Taiwan’s visibility. The International Symposium Celebrating Nine Decades of the National Central Library concluded with a group photo of attendees and many sincere goodbyes.



A final shot at the conclusion of the conference.

■ **Making Friends through Literature: NCL Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng Heads a Delegation to the Collège de France to Launch New TRCCS**

NCL and the Collège de France formally opened the new Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies in Paris on May 31, 2023. The ceremony

was directed by NCL Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng and Collège de France Administrator Thomas Römer. Representative Wu Chih-chung from the Bureau de Représentation de Taipei en France and Director of the Education Section Mei-chen Lu, the renowned sinologists Professor Pierre-Etienne Will and Professor Frantz Grenet, as well as Collège de France’s Director of Documentary Networks and Partnerships Anne Chatellier, and Chinese Studies Librarian Delphine Spicq were all invited to attend the ceremony. NCL began establishing TRCCSs in 2012. The Collège de France marks its 37th partnering institution. Currently, a total of 45 institutions have signed contracts with NCL.

Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng stated the Collège de France is an institution of higher learning and research located in Paris, France. It was established during the 16th century, and from then until now it still insists on academic freedom, independent thinking, and the pursuit of equality in education. NCL, which also believes in openness and in creating a free academic environment, has for the last thirty years received many teachers and researchers from the Collège de France and given them grants to research various topics in sinology. Our two institutions have enjoyed many close interactions. Because of this, she visited Europe in 2012 with a group of librarians to attend the European Association for Chinese Studies’ biennial conference. During that time, she made a point to visit the Collège de France and was impressed with its vast Chinese studies collection comprised of 250,000 books (including ancient works) and 1,300 journals. Indeed, it has the most local gazetteers from China of any library in Europe. Therefore, in 2021 during the worst of the pandemic, both parties overcame many obstacles to continue working toward the establishment of a Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies. After it was set up, a Taiwan Lecture on Chinese Studies was also held along with a conference. The interaction between scholars was something to behold. There was even more exchange than normal happening in other international Chinese studies events. Consequently, when NCL visited Europe this time, special plans were made to have a signage unveiling ceremony at the Collège and officially launch its TRCCS.