

National Central Library

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Spotlights

■ NCL Brings Animals in Literature to Life, Attracting the Public to Explore Ancient Texts with “Browsing the Classics: Amazing Animal Sightings” at 2025 TiBE

Renowned for its rich collection of classical texts, the National Central Library drew on this strength to celebrate the arrival of the Year of the Golden Snake in 2025. At the Taipei International Book Exhibition (TiBE), NCL put on a special exhibition area themed “Browsing the Classics: Amazing Animal Sightings,” using digital enhancements to bring to life ancient literary depictions of animals in a contemporary context. The exhibition opened on February 4, 2025, with over 40 guests in attendance, including Department Head Hsueh-Cheng Liang from the Ministry of Education, representatives from various foreign offices in Taiwan, as well as members of the local cultural, educational, and publishing sectors. The exhibition ran from February 4-9.



A group photo of special guests at the book exhibition's opening

Department Head Hsueh-Cheng Liang from the Ministry of Education remarked that the National Central Library houses an extraordinary collection of themed works spanning from the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties to the modern era. Its vast trove of classical texts and documents is renowned worldwide. Through vivid textual and visual depictions in these early classics, we gain insight into how people of the past observed and understood animals. This exhibition, which features animals from historical texts as well as mythical creatures from legends, invites readers to explore their wonders. By reinterpreting these materials,

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NCL broadens our cultural horizons, allowing us to transcend the boundaries of time and space and rediscover the enduring value of the classics.

NCL Director-General Han-Ching Wang also noted that the academic field of animal cultural history has been flourishing in recent years. Many of NCL's treasured classical texts include valuable records of how animals were observed and imagined in ancient times. One remarkable example is NCL's crown jewel—Illustrated Descriptions of Metals, Insects, Plants, and Trees—a richly illustrated natural history masterpiece created over 400 years ago by prominent Ming dynasty female writer Wen Shu, who spent three years completing the work. This exquisite text is regarded as a world-class compendium of flora and fauna. To help readers engage more deeply with these classical works and transform historical knowledge into modern understanding, NCL has planned a series of activities centered on the theme of exploring animals in the classics. This theme also resonates with the TiBE 2025's overarching concept of "Follow Your Fancy in Reading." The exhibition is organized around four major sections: "Browsing Treasures: A Selection of Animal Images in NCL's Ancient Book Collection," an AR experience titled "Capturing Ancient Mythical Beasts from Legendary Realms," an audiovisual showcase "Ancient Sounds of the Past," in addition to various educational themes and interactive games that promise an enriching experience. Notably, to extend the learning beyond the physical exhibition space, NCL launched the initiative "An Animal Library at Home." Through this program, readers can continue their exploration at home via NCL's digital OTT TV platform <https://nclibtv.ncl.edu.tw/>, which features a selection of 100 animal-themed picture e-books. This initiative ensures that the themes of the exhibition continue to inspire and educate within everyday family life.



A shot of the ribbon cutting ceremony

In addition, NCL invited internationally renowned paper sculptor Mr. Hsin-Fu Hung to speak on "The Possibilities of Paper: What Paper Wants to Share" on February 7 during the Starlight Night at the Blue Salon.



The main visual image of the exhibition

■ NCL Shared Research from Taiwan with the US and Deepened International Exchange

The Association for Asian Studies (AAS) held its 2025 annual conference from March 13 to 16 in Columbus, Ohio. The National Central Library, the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, and the National Taiwan University Press jointly participated in the conference book exhibition, showcasing nearly 500 publications from Taiwan and thereby promoting the achievements of Taiwanese academic research to an international audience. On the morning of March 15 (local time), The Ohio State University held a book donation ceremony at the William Oxley Thompson Memorial Library. At the event, Director Louis Yen-Feng Lei of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Chicago officially presented the collection of books exhibited at the conference to the university on behalf of Taiwan. The donation was received by Professor Musa Wakhungu Olaka, Associate Director for Special Collections and Area Studies, and Professor Guoqing Li, Chinese Studies Librarian. The ceremony was also attended by Section Chiefs Hsu-Hua Chu and Yu-Ching Shu of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, who helped arrange the donation.