

are also closely tied to the accuracy and completeness of bibliographic information. NCL continues to work with the Ministry of Culture to strengthen the bibliographic quality of ISBNnet, providing a stable foundation for Taiwan's publishing information infrastructure.

Press conference attendees praised the results of the system function optimization, providing feedback during the final discussion that brought the event to a productive close. NCL will continue to promote future integration stages on the foundation created by this initial stage of advancements, gradually introducing AI and other new technologies to create a smarter and more user-friendly service environment for ISBN application, serving as an important stabilizing force for healthy development of Taiwan's publishing industry.

■ National Central Library's Special Exhibition Tours Southern Taiwan: 'A Shared Sky' Rare Book Exhibition Comes to the National Cheng Kung University Library

On the afternoon of January 16, 2026, a cultural feast transcending time and space, titled A Shared Sky: The World of Chinese Texts and Cultural Exchange officially commenced at the National Cheng Kung University (NCKU) Main Library. Organized by the National Central Library (NCL), this heavyweight exhibition follows a successful debut in Taipei last summer. Now in its fourth stop, the tour brings the wisdom and charm of ancient texts to the Tainan campus. The exhibition is scheduled to run from January 16 to March 31.



Pictured Location: NCKU Main Library, Tainan

From the National Central Library to the community: Breathing new life into old works

The National Central Library stated that since the successful conclusion of the initial exhibition last year, it has actively planned this touring exhibition to challenge the impression that ancient books are only squirreled away in museum display cases. For this leg of the tour at the NCKU Main Library, the NCL expressed special gratitude to Director Tzu-Fun Fu and her team for their comprehensive planning. The exhibition's location on the first floor of the library is a deliberate choice to literally bring the texts to the audiences themselves. These ancient texts are and should be accessible both in a literal and figurative sense to audiences of all backgrounds and ages. To experience is to create, and vice versa.

The Five Themes: Constellating the Stars of Asian Civilization

The title of our exhibition, "A Shared Sky," symbolizes how words and knowledge shine upon human civilization like a canopy of stars. The exhibition area is exceptionally divided into five themes, guiding visitors through a cross-border journey:

- Within a Measured Space: A deep dive into the millennium-long evolution of writing and printing technologies.
- The World of Script: Exploring how Chinese classics spread across the Sinographic Cultural Sphere
- Traces in Print: Exploring early Malaysia and foreign observations in classical Chinese records.
- Formosa: Exploring the charm of Taiwan's history and scenery through rare archival collections
- The Treasury of Rarities: A curated showcase of library highlights, representing the pinnacle of books as an artform

Spanning writing evolution, the Sinographic Cultural Sphere, maritime knowledge, and the historical records of Formosa we demonstrate that classical Chinese texts exist not in isolation, but in constant circulation and dialogue. The title "Shared Sky" emphasizes interconnectedness, where we discover and understand each other through shared knowledge under the same canopy of culture. Highlighting these interconnections allows our exhibition to not only challenge the perceived distance of ancient texts, but also to challenge the dichotomy of the observer and the observed.

According to the curators, classical Chinese texts exist in connection with maritime travel, medical history, and evolving worldviews. With on-site interactions, situational design, and digital resources, the audience may realize that they are not mere observers in this broader culture, but active participants in its shaping and reconstitution.



A snapshot from the exhibition

■ **A Dialogue with Plants Across Time through 400-year Old Nature Paintings**

National Central Library and Linking Publishing held a book launch on January 31, 2026 for their new release *Collection of Nature Sketches by a Reclusive Woman Painter*. At the event, they guided readers toward a new understanding of this important work of nature painting through the sharing of multidisciplinary information by publishers and researchers, bringing new life to the 400 years old historical artwork that previously sat gathering dust in the archives. The event brought together members of the publishing and academic communities to explore and present the diverse possibilities of bringing ancient collections to contemporary readers.

Collection of Nature Sketches by a Reclusive Woman Painter is based on the national treasure-level work “Golden Rocks, Insects, and Plants” (*Jinshi Kunchong Caomuzhuang*) by Ming Dynasty woman painter Wen Chu. The paintings in the volume include medicinal plants, flowers and fruits, insects, birds and animals, and other natural elements. Wen Chu painted with delicate brush strokes and elegant color schemes, not only possessing a high quality of artistic expression, but also presenting observations and understanding of the natural world in the Ming Dynasty, therefore highly valuable both aesthetically and as a source

of knowledge. However, works on this volume have long been limited to academic research texts, therefore missing out on opportunities to fully enter into public reader awareness.



A group photo with NCL Director-General and four co-authors

This publication marks the sixth collaborative publication between NCL and Linking Publishing, a continuation of their collective effort to “read classical works through contemporary perspectives.” The team at Linking selected representative works from the NCL collection to include in the publication, arranged in a theme-based layout and printed with exquisite quality. The collection was edited into three volumes under the themes, “Medicinal Plants,” “Fruits and Flowers,” and “Animals,” conjuring these precious images from the depths of academic archives and research into a published format accessible to the reading public.

The book launch event invited the four co-authors: NTNU Professor Sheng Huang, Sun Ten Pharmaceutical’s Dr. Wu-Chang Chuang, NPUST Assistant Professor Chih-Kai Yang, and National Museum of Science Department of Biology Chair Ming-Lun Jeng to share their experiences across disciplines. These four experts shared their analyses of Wen Chu’s observational methods and knowledge of the natural world as expressed in her paintings, from their perspectives in the fields of botany, traditional Chinese medicine, forestry, and animal biology, working to initiate possibilities of dialogue between historical paintings and contemporary science.