

Events

■ NCL and Chaotian Temple in Beigang Advance Digitization Collaboration

NCL and Chaotian Temple in Beigang presented the results of their digitization collaboration, which they titled “Digital Empowerment for a Millennium of Incense” on the morning of January 3, 2026, in the briefing room of NCL. They showcased results of the first phase achieved since the signing of their cooperation agreement in 2024. Under this collaboration, Chaotian Temple provided archival materials, while NCL contributed digitization technologies and database platforms. With the assistance of local cultural and historical volunteers in identifying documents and preparing metadata descriptions, the project has established a new model of cross-sector collaboration among libraries, temples, local organizations, and civil society.



NCL Director-General Wang and Chaotian Temple Chairman Yung-Te Tsai at the beginning of the outcome's presentation

In her remarks, Director-General Han-Ching Wang expressed her gratitude for the enthusiasm and professionalism of the volunteers, noting that they have enriched the digitized images with valuable interpretive content. She emphasized that this segment of history has been preserved through the collective efforts of all parties and is now being disseminated globally via the Internet. The project has already attracted the attention of scholars both in Taiwan and abroad; in addition to interest expressed by several domestic researchers, fellows supported by Sinology research centers in Europe and the United States have also shown concern for its progress, demonstrating

the international influence of Mazu belief. Director-General Wang further expressed her expectation for a second phase of collaboration, through which Taiwan's Mazu culture can gain greater visibility on the international stage.

Chaotian Temple Chairman Yung-Te Tsai noted that this collaboration represents a perfect integration of local religious culture and modern technology, enabling Mazu culture to transcend geographical boundaries. He reflected on the efforts since 2023 to position Mazu as the “Goddess of World Peace” and to promote international exchange, and pointed out that the results of digitization efforts will serve as an important bridge connecting Mazu branch temples around the world. Chairman Tsai also revealed plans to establish a Chaotian Temple museum in the future to comprehensively preserve and exhibit its documentary materials and artifacts.



Volunteer Kuo-Chou Huang sharing insights from some of the documents digitized

Professor Hsiang-Hui Tsai, Chair of the Taiwan Mazu Culture Research Association, analyzed the unique status of Chaotian Temple from an academic perspective, identifying four defining characteristics: a follower base exceeding ten million, a well-preserved and complete architectural layout, comprehensive preservation of historical artifacts, and the orthodox transmission of ritual practices. Professor Tsai commended the efforts of Director-General Wang and Chairman Tsai, noting that Chaotian Temple's initiatives in artifact preservation and digitization are likely to inspire greater participation from other temples, while also promoting global understanding of Mazu culture through the Taiwan Memory platform.

Volunteer Kuo-Chou Huang, with a detective-

like enthusiasm, uncovered historical details revealing that during the February 28 Incident, Chaotian Temple suspended the Mazu pilgrimage procession due to soaring prices, as documented in meeting records. He also noted that during the post-martial law period, even small gatherings required police permits, and, through receipts, traced Chaotian Temple's support for Hsing-Hsien Chang, Taiwan's first Olympic athlete, thereby reconstructing aspects of daily life in Beigang during the Japanese colonial period. Volunteer Wei-Chen Lin added that a large number of postcards from the Japanese colonial period featuring Chaotian Temple were discovered, many accompanied by English and Japanese descriptions, indicating its international recognition. Despite periods of economic downturn, invitation cards enthusiastically encouraged participation in pilgrimage processions, reflecting the resilience of religious belief. In addition, a railway map from the period prominently marked Chaotian Temple and included detailed historical notes, underscoring its historical significance.



Yen-Hsiang Chiu, researcher at the Chaotian Temple Museum, presenting the outcomes and future prospects of the collaboration

Researcher Yen-Hsiang Chiu of the Chaotian Temple Museum systematically outlined the significance of the digitized files, emphasizing that the large-scale release of images may have a substantial impact on academic discourse. He also presented several key documents, providing rich materials for future research. He further noted that Chaotian Temple still holds a considerable number of documents and rare books from the Qing dynasty awaiting digitization, indicating broad potential for continued collaboration between the two parties.

The presentation concluded with a group photo of all participants, followed by a guided visit to the reading area to view the digitized files and the accompanying exhibition, which ran through March 1, 2026. The results of this collaboration have been made publicly available through the Taiwan Memory system (<https://ncl.taipei/beigangctt>), providing access for all and inviting feedback. The project sets a model for cross-sector collaboration among libraries, temples, community organizations, and civil society, while enabling Taiwan's Mazu culture to be disseminated globally through digitization—preserving history and fostering international exchange and scholarly research.

■ **NCL and the Qingshui Temple in Bangka Sign Digitization Cooperation Agreement**

On January 23, 2026, NCL Director-General Han-Ching Wang and Chairman Cheng-Tse Chou of Qingshui Temple signed a digitalization cooperation agreement. The two parties will collaborate to digitize the temple's documents and materials for digital archiving, and upon completion, the content will be made publicly available through NCL's Taiwan Memory system.

The Qingshui Temple is a municipally designated historic site in Taipei. Dedicated primarily to Qingshui Patriarch Chao-Ying Chen, the temple was originally completed in the late Qianlong period of the Qing dynasty. It underwent restoration during the Jiaqing era and, after being destroyed by warfare in the Xianfeng period, was rebuilt in the Tongzhi era. It stands as a major center of religious belief and local history in northern Taiwan. Beyond serving as a site for religious worship, the temple embodies the migration history and cultural memory of Bangka (the modern Wanhua district in Taipei). Together with the Longshan Temple, the Qingshan Temple, and the Tianhou Temple, it is collectively known as the "Four Great Temples of Bangka." The Qingshui Patriarch holds a revered position in folk religion, attracting a steady stream of worshippers, and has inspired local legends such as that of the "Noseless Patriarch," symbolizing devotees' aspirations for protection and divine guardianship.