

by overseas Chinese writers in Panama. Included were volumes on the development of the Panamanian government over the past century (1903~2003), indigenous plants of Panama, Panamanian cuisine, the Panama Canal and Panama's national parks. The book exchange will add to resources on Panama studies in the NCL's foreign language collection, enabling readers to further understand Panama's history, politics, economy, society and culture. NCL Director General Dr. Huang Kuan-Chung thanked the donors and expressed hope that the NCL can further advance culture exchanges with Panama.

Opened in August 2005, the Chen Feng-tian Memorial Library is the first library in Panama with a collection focusing on Chinese studies.

■ Taichung City and North Shore, NZ Hold Book Exchange

Since 2005, the Cultural Affairs Bureau (CAB) of Taichung City has been collecting English-language children's books from English-speaking sister cities and promoted its plan to establish English reading rooms (areas) for children through get-togethers with international friends.

At the end of 2005, the Children's Room under the CAB established central Taiwan's first English book library, called "Fun Fun ABC." With assistance from the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in Auckland, New Zealand, the bureau first received book donations arranged by Mayor George Wood of North Shore City in New Zealand. The US city of Tacoma and the North American Taiwanese Women's Association (NATWA) also enthusiastically raised books for



Books donated to North Shore City, New Zealand, including works by Taichung City writers, Da Dun Literature Award-winning publications, and art books (December 2007)



The North Shore City welcome banquet and a display of books exchanged between the city and Taichung (September 2006)

the plan. As of December 2007, the CAB's English children book collection comprised about 14,000 titles. Since the library opened in November 2005, these books have been provided on loan 68,284 times, averaging over four loans per title and indicating the strong demand for English books among city residents.

In September 2006, Taichung Mayor Jason Hu led a delegation to visit North Shore City for a book donation exchange with Mayor Wood. The two sides also signed a two-year book exchange agreement. In 2007, a total of 110 works by Taichung City writers and artists were donated to North Shore City through TECO in Auckland.

The Fun Fun ABC library organizes activities to promote public use of the library's English-language reading materials. The library has been especially beneficial to families unable to buy English books for extracurricular reading. The book donation drive has also been highly successful in promoting cultural exchanges through sister city ties, overseas government offices, NATWA and other channels. (Chinese text provided by the Cultural Affairs Bureau of Taichung City)

■ *16th TIBE Spotlights Australia*

Australia's publishing industry stole the spotlight at the 16th Taipei International Book Exhibition (TIBE) from February 13 to 18, 2008, at the Taipei World Trade Center. The Australia National Pavilion showcased the youthful energy, natural attractions and cultural diversity of the land Down Under. Australian books, art, children's literature, travel destinations, life and cuisine were also introduced at the theme pavilion.

Among the special guests invited to the pavilion were Tony Wheeler, founder of the Lonely Planet series of travel guides, and his wife Maureen Wheeler; Markus Zusak, author of the bestseller *The Book Thief*; and multiple international award-winning book illustrator Shaun Tan. Twenty-five major Australian publishers also attended the exhibition, organizing a display of nearly 1,000 publications.

As a warm-up for this year's TIBE, the "World in Books: Huashan Book Fair" was held on February 2 to 3 at the Huashan Culture Park in Taipei. The fair featured a number of activities that challenged traditional ideas about book exhibitions, such as the "Handmade Reading:

Creative Competitive Bidding Fair." There was also an educational area with displays of various illustrated books and children's literature.

■ *NCL Highlights History at the 16th TIBE*

The National Central Library (NCL) presented a glimpse of yesteryear Taiwan at its exhibit during the 16th Taipei International Book Exhibition (TIBE), held from February 13 to 18, 2008. The NCL display highlighted rare books, historic contracts, old photographs, woodblock prints, postcards and historic maps of Taiwan in the library collection, opening a door to the beauty of Taiwan in former times. The two display signboards further underscored the exhibit theme with a collage of historic images of Taiwan.

Under the theme, "The More You Taste of Yesteryear, the More the Flavor Lingers," the NCL display provided an overview of its extensive collection of research resources. This collection includes over 2,600 historic contracts, about 8,000 genealogical records, over 4,000 scenic postcards from the Japanese occupation period, and a complete set of all 1,171 "Patriot Lottery Tickets" issued in Taiwan. The NCL has also obtained reproductions or usage authorizations through digitization cooperation projects with domestic and overseas libraries. These new collection materials



Visitors check out the NCL booth at this year's TIBE.