



CCA Minister Huang Pi-twan (third from the right) tours the "Brevity and Eternity" exhibition (Photo by Pinery S. Wu)



During the exhibition, Ms. Hua Yan (third from the left) views manuscripts she donated to the NCL, accompanied by NCL Acting Director-general Sung Chien-cheng (far left). (Photo by Pinery S. Wu)

Hua donated to the NCL more than one thousand rare photographs of her family going back four generations. The photos were displayed along with the donated volumes at the exhibition. (Chinese text by Cheng Te-han),

■ ***Zhong-Shu-Xuan-Lan—— Looking at the Rare Books Collection purchased by the NCL from the Work Reports of the Document Preservation League***

The rare books and documents collections of the National Central Library (NCL) mainly comprise of volumes from the Song, Yuan and Ming periods. They are precious and were rather difficult to acquire. Among them are those acquired during the war resistance against Japan in 1940 and 1941. They

were secretly sought and bought from the accumulated treasures of various collectors in war-torn Shanghai. These were the largest in scope and the most meaningful acquisitions. It is considered a significant event in rare books acquisition.

In order to prevent important books and documents from falling into foreign hands, the Document Preservation League was established with the support of the Ministry of Education and the management of Sino-British Keng Funds Board of Directors. It was led by the former NCL Director General, Chiang Fu-tsung and several learned people from Shanghai and Hong Kong. They conducted an exhaustive search and purchased secretly. In a period of barely two years, they took the risk of searching and purchasing 4,864 sets comprising more than 48,000 volumes of rare books and manuscripts. These rare books were partly hidden in Shanghai, partly transported to Chung Qing and a part of it remained in Hong Kong. After the eruption of the Pacific War in 1941, part of the collection from Hong Kong fell into the hands of the Japanese army and were sent to Tokyo. It was not until the victory over Japan when our representative group in Japan seriously verified the existence of these precious collection and were finally returned to our Library. They successively followed the various displacements and reached the National Central Library in Taiwan.

The present exhibition (from 23rd June 2008) especially chooses the previous work reports of the Documents Preservation League to show its diligence in searching and purchasing rare books and documents. At the same time, representative rare books and documents mentioned in the report will also be exhibited as a means of reference. Most of these rare documents come from the libraries of important private collectors of the time such as the family Liu, Deng, Shen, Qu, Wang, Zhang and others. Moreover, due to a serious fear of the rare documents being damaged in the process of transporting them during the chaos caused by war, some documents with historical values were selected and compiled into an initial collection called "Xuan-

Lan-Tang Series". Among them are extant copies and other historical items that were selected and included in the exhibition. All these enable us to see the criteria and vision in the selection of books during that period. One can also understand the importance and the quality of the Rare Books Collections of the NCL.

CCS News and Activities

■ CCS Seminars

Visiting scholar Associate Prof. Olga Lomová presented a paper at a seminar held by the Center for Chinese Studies (CCS) on June 24, 2008. Prof. Lomová, a CCS scholarship recipient from the Institute of East Asian Studies at Charles University in the Czech Republic, delivered her paper in Chinese on the topic of "Translating Sima Qian—An Attempt at a Cross-cultural Communication." The seminar was presided by Prof. Fang Yu of the Department of Chinese Literature at National Taiwan University.

Prof. Lomová, who also serves as director of the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation International Sinological Center at Charles University, is an expert on ancient Chinese poetry and literature. She noted that the translation of Chinese documents has always been a focal task of Sinology in Europe. Prof. Lomová has translated the *Classic of Tea*, *Three Heroes and Five Gallants* and other Chinese classics. She also continued the translation started by Czech Sinologist Dr. Timoteus Pokora (1928~1985) of Sima Qian's *Records of the Grand Historian* and

plans to publish a selected translation into Czech. When translating classical works of different cultures, Prof. Lomová notes that it is important to closely study the methodology issues involved and also consider changes to the meaning of the document resulting from translation into a new language removed from the work's original cultural and historical context. The interpretive role of the translator as well as the intended readership must also be considered. Prof. Lomová said she hopes to convey in her translation Sima Qian's concept of the fading away of historical events, as well as the literary beauty of the *Records of the Grand Historian*. She believes that the reworking of the meticulous academic style of rendering Dr. Pokora's translation into a fluent form will contribute greatly to cross-cultural communication.

Prof. Lomová illustrated her views with specific examples, noting that this work is positioned between early and modern western translation and research of the *Records of the Grand Historian*.

■ "Beyond Text" Forum Explores Material Culture

An international forum on "Beyond Text: Multicultural Historic Perspectives on Material Culture" was held at the NCL on September 19, 2008. The forum was organized by the Research Center for Humanities and Social Sciences at Tsing Hua University and the Center for Chinese Studies (CCS) at the NCL with support from the Cabinet-level National Science Council (NSC). Guest speakers at the forum included Prof. Evelyn Welch and Prof. Frank Dikotter of London University. They spoke, respectively on the topics of "Touching the Past: A Study of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe" and "Tangible Worship: A Study of Modern Material Culture." Participants from Taiwan included National Central University Prof. Kang Lai-si, who spoke on "Material Culture in the *Dream of the Red Chamber*"; and National Tsing Hua University Associate Prof. Chen Chueh, who spoke on "Material Culture in Overseas Travel Notes from



Prof. Olga Lomová (front row, second from left), Prof. Fang Yu (front row, second from right), and seminar participants (Photo by Caesar Tsai)