

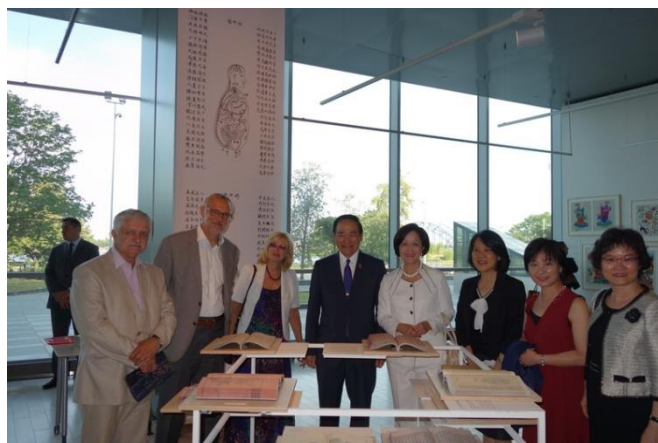
## **“The Imprint of Civilization”: Exhibition at the National Library of Latvia**

In line with Taiwanese government policy to promote Taiwan Academy worldwide, Taiwan’s National Central Library (NCL), the National Library of Latvia, and the University of Latvia jointly hosted an exhibition of rare and ancient books at the National Library of Latvia in Riga. The opening ceremony took place on August 27, 2015, and was accompanied by a Taiwan Lecture on Chinese Studies. Prof. Hu Siao-chen, director of the Academia Sinica’s Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy generously accepted an invitation to deliver a lecture. Her lecture, entitled “Burning the Midnight Oil: The Making of Verse Narrative Texts by Qing Women,” shed light on the evolution of *tanci* novels written by women during the Ming and Qing dynasties. It also explored the works of this genre, their reception, and publication. This was the NCL’s first visit to Europe since holding rare and ancient book exhibitions in three major US cities in 2012 and 2013, and therefore represents an important milestone in the expansion of Taiwan’s academic exchange program in Europe.

The National Library of Latvia was celebrating the completion of its new building, and so invited the NCL to hold an exhibition in partnership with itself and the University of Latvia. The exhibition, entitled “The Imprint of Civilization,” ran from August 27 to October 30, 2015. It showcased the historical development of printing and related techniques in China, including writing, printing, publication, and other book-related activities. It also highlighted how the most important juncture in the history of East Asian cultural development—the invention of printing and development of the print trade—enabled the book and the literary arts to reach a mass audience and profoundly influence traditional Chinese society. Besides the ancient books and documents on show at the exhibition, there were also opportunities for visitors to experience woodblock printing, moveable-type printing, 5-color printing, traditional thread binding, and calligraphy, as well as flower arranging, traditional tea preparation, picture hanging, and incense burning. This highlighted the special qualities of Chinese culture in Taiwan, delighting those attending the exhibition’s opening ceremony.

Representative of the Taipei Mission to the Republic of Latvia, Mr. Ko Kuang-yueh, kindly accepted an invitation to attend and give an introductory speech. In addition, over one hundred Latvian legislators and cultural officials were also in attendance. The acting director of the National Library of Latvia and Dr. Frank Kraushaar of the University of Latvia both delivered introductory speeches, followed by director of NCL’s Special Collections Yu Hsiao-ming, on behalf of NCL Director

General Tseng Shu-hsien. Then the lecture and exhibition simultaneously commenced. In 2013, the Taipei Mission to the Republic of Latvia witnessed the opening of the Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies (TRCCS) at the National Library of Latvia and the University of Latvia. Its representatives were also present at this event to give their support, emphasizing its great importance to the Mission. Representative Ko thanked the National Central Library for its hard work in promoting international Chinese studies exchanges and partnerships. He also thanked the NCL for spreading important knowledge and scholarship through its Taiwan Lectures on Chinese Studies and this exhibition, which gives scholars of other countries further opportunities to find out about Taiwan's Chinese studies research and appreciate the beauty of Chinese culture. Lastly he expressed his gratitude to the National Library of Latvia and University of Latvia for their support and great care in making the necessary arrangements, which help to make cultural exchange a bridge that transcends national borders.



Representative Ko Kuang-yueh (5<sup>th</sup> right) and Prof. Hu Siao-chen attend the opening ceremony for the exhibition “The Imprint of Civilization”



Representative Ko Kuang-yueh (center) presents the acting director of the National Library of Latvia with a gift of facsimile editions of important books from the NCL's collection



Guests gather for the "The Imprint of Civilization" exhibition opening ceremony



Representative Ko Kuang-yueh takes up the calligraphy brush to write the aphorism "Tian xia wei gong," and explains the meaning to guests



Prof. Hu Siao-chen delivers her lecture



At the end of the opening ceremony, a demonstration of the art of tea drinking



Guests attending the opening ceremony try their hand at 5-color printing