

NCL Special Exhibition Shines in Europe—“The Imprint of Civilization: Ancient Books from the National Central Library, Taiwan” held at the National Library of Estonia

On 8 October 2021, the National Central Library collaborated for the first time with the National Library of Estonia, holding at that library the opening ceremony of “The Imprint of Civilization: Ancient Books from the National Central Library, Taiwan.” The exhibition will last from 8 October to 23 October. It will exhibit inscriptions on oracle bones, facsimiles from the library’s collection, such as rubbings of bronze inscriptions and stone inscriptions and others, and introduce the most important features of the National Central Library.

For the National Central Library, the trip follows on that to the National Library of Latvia in 2015, and the 2016 holding of the "Imprint of Civilization" ancient documents exhibition at Hungary’s National Széchényi Library, and is a further visit to the Baltic. This exhibition also represents the third occasion on which the National Central Library has collaborated with a European country. It is hoped that, through jointly holding exhibitions, the two countries will activate a passionate cultural exchange and achieve the dual purpose of promoting education through books and advancing cultural exchanges. One of the highlights of this exhibition is printing technology, one of the four great inventions of traditional China, and it focuses on how this world-influencing technology has developed and evolved over the long course of history. The exhibits involved range from oracle bones and stone carvings, used to record text since ancient times, to various handwritten copies that became mainstream after the popularization of paper and pen, to the popularity of engraving and movable-type printing after the invention of printing, as well as such extraordinary techniques as tracing, which resembles today’s photocopying, and transcribing.

The prologue to the exhibition, The Imprint of Civilization: Ancient Books from the National Central Library, Taiwan, began amid the mellifluous sounds of traditional Chinese music. Representative Eric Huang of the Taipei Mission in the Republic of

Latvia was invited to attend and delivered a speech at the opening ceremony. Representative Huang not only thanked the National Library of Estonia for its cooperation on this exhibition, but also strongly affirmed the considerable significance of this exhibition to the cultural exchanges between the two countries. Amid the severe impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng of the National Central Library was unable to attend in person but still participated in the opening ceremony through video and online live broadcast. Director-General Tseng said that, in order to strengthen cooperation with national libraries around the world and promote international exchanges, the National Central Library and the National Library of Estonia would, through the exhibition, jointly promote familiarity and understanding of each other's cultures. Ms. Janne Andresoo, Director-General of the National Library of Estonia, praised the National Central Library's "amazing" special collection and expressed her pleasure at having the opportunity to co-organize this exhibition. The National Library of Estonia is known for its digital collections and services, but it also cherishes the past. This exhibition provides a unique insight into the history of paper, writing and books, like a wonderful historical feast. She concluded with a famous quote from Estonian literary master Juhan Liiv, which perfectly embodies the core concept of this exhibition: "Those who forget the past have no future."

In an accessible, clear, simple and lively style, in a National Library of Estonia brimming with a Chinese cultural ambience, the exhibition thrills participants, guests and audiences alike. Director-General Tseng stressed that the event fully demonstrated Taiwan's soft power and represented highly successful cultural diplomacy. "I would like to thank Representative Huang of the Taipei Mission in the Republic of Latvia, and my colleagues in the delegation for coming all the way to cooperate in this great event at this memorable moment and witness this milestone in cultural exchanges between Taiwan and Estonia. "I am especially grateful to all sectors of Estonian society for their support of this exhibition, and hope that the cultural exchanges between our two countries will continue, unaffected by the epidemic, and that we will enjoy closer and deeper cooperation in the future.



DIRECTOR-GENERAL SHU-HSIEN TSENG CUTS THE RIBBON AT THE EXHIBITION OPENING.



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