

PROGRAMS

■ NCL and U.S. Library of Congress Cooperate on Rare Book Project

The collection of the U.S. Library of Congress (LC) contains nearly 3,000 rare Chinese books. These works date from the Sung to early Ching periods and include valuable imperial petitions and collected literary works. There are also highly distinctive local histories from the Ming and Ching periods, as well as Ching editions of ancient works, constituting an important resource for research on Chinese politics, society, economics, literature and local history.

In Taiwan, the NCL has long been working hard to digitalize its collection resources, and to make images of its collection materials accessible outside the library. The library has made considerable achievements in digital resource creation and operations, earning broad international attention. From its participation in the Taiwan Area Digital Archive Program, and subsequent digitalization of rare books, local documents, and important periodical resources in its collection, the NCL has gained extensive experience in digitalizing Chinese resources.

LC Asian Division Director Hwa-wei Lee and Chinese section head Dr. Mi Chu Wiens visited the NCL in February 2004 to understand rare book digitalization operations at the NCL and to propose cooperation between the two sides in scanning the LC's collection of rare Chinese books. Through the collaboration the LC hopes to learn from the NCL's experience in rare book digitalization, and to get assistance from the NCL in converting its rare book collection into digital format. The venture will also facilitate collection building and exchange between the two sides. During a visit by NCL Director Jhuang Fang-rung to the LC in May 2004, the two sides verbally agreed to cooperate on scanning rare book resources, and after several meetings, an official cooperation agreement was signed in March 2005.

Under the project, which will last from March 2005 to December 2007, the LC will provide scannable rare Chinese books (the books will be restored before scanning), while the NCL will dispatch personnel, equipment, and digitalization technology to the LC to carry out scanning work. The digital images and file catalog are slated to be completed by the end of

2008; and the results of the collaboration will be made publicly available online.

In the first stage, the project will focus on scanning about 80,000 (nearly 300 volumes) of unique material in the collections of the two sides. The second stage will involve scanning of catalogs of different rare book editions in the NCL collection; and in the third stage, the two sides will complete the conversion of NCL rare book catalogs from microfiche to electronic image form.

The NCL-LC project is an important benchmark for the NCL in the area of international cooperation. By bringing together the experience of the NCL and the valuable collection resources of the LC, it will also contribute to the preservation of rare Chinese books and make them more widely available to the public, realizing the ideal of resource sharing and opening a new era in international cooperation between the NCL and LC.

■ NCL and Tainan Public Library Cooperate on Digitization of Japanese-era Books

The collection of the Tainan Public Library (TPL) contains over 12,000 Japanese language works, including over 2,000 newspapers on Taiwan dating back to the Japanese occupation period. The library compiled a catalog of these resources several years ago to facilitate research use. However, in order to better manage these historic documents, public access has been restricted to in-library reading. Still, the library has worried about damage to these materials through reader misuse and deterioration with age.

In order to preserve and improve reader access to the Japanese-era materials, the library has been converting these resources to digital format. The project is proceeding in cooperation with the NCL, which is providing financial and technical support.

The cooperation agreement between the TPL and NCL was signed on March 14, 2005, by TPL director Wen Tsai-tang and NCL director Juang Fang-rung. The project will run from April 2005 to December 2007, during which the two sides hope to digitize about 2,000 books, photos, maps, newspapers and other original documents from the Japanese occupation period. The 700 oldest books and Showa period newspapers will be scanned first. These historical materials