

## Taipei Promotes Literary Culture on the MRT

Commuters on Taipei's mass rapid transit (MRT) system can now enjoy a little literary respite from the bustle of the city. On July 28, Ms. Lung Ying-tai (龍應台), director of the Cultural Affairs Bureau of Taipei, Mr. Chen Chun-liang (陳椿亮), manager of the Taipei Rapid Transit Corp., and Mr. Chou Cheng-kang (周正剛), president of Kingstone Book Store Co., announced the opening a series of activities called "Reading on the MRT".

The activities included poetry submissions, lectures on social and cultural issues, and a public vote for suggested books. Poetry has been displayed in city buses for several years, but this is the first year that topics will focus on the significance of the MRT in the daily life and culture of Taipei.

Mr. Chen elaborated on the connection between culture and rapid transit at the opening ceremony. He observed that the first "rapid transit culture" was the habit of riders on the London "tube" to wipe from their face the black soot left by the kerosene lamps when emerging from the station. The second, he said, was the graffiti that covered the walls of the New York subway. He expressed a hope that reading would become the culture of Taipei's MRT.

A public poll of the "Top-10 Recommended Books for MRT Reading," said the Cultural Affairs Bureau, would continue in three phases through the end of the year. Commuters will be able to vote for their favorite books on ballots to be distributed at the information counters of the MRT stations and Kingstone bookstores in the greater Taipei area.

Submissions for the poetry contest will be accepted until October 1 and the 24 winners will be announced in November. Prize-winning works will be displayed at the Taipei Main Station and stations on the MRT Tamsui line.

From August to November, a series of public "Seminars of Care" will be held on environmental, cultural, and artistic issues.