

News from the ROC Library World

Seminar on Public Libraries in the 21st Century

A seminar on public libraries in the twenty-first century kicked off on May 1 at the National Taiwan Normal University in Taipei. The three-day meeting, sponsored by the Central Office of the Council for Cultural Affairs in cooperation with the National Taichung Library, was dubbed “21st Century Public Libraries: Vision and Reality.” Topics centered on strategies and practical exchanges to help public libraries meet the challenges of information technology, social transition, inter-library cooperation, and library reorganization. Over 30 scholars and specialists in the field of library and information science spoke at the seminar, including Prof. Chen-ku Wang (王振鵠) of NTNU, Prof. Margaret Fung (張鼎鍾) of Chengchi University, and Dr. Hua-wei Li (李華偉), the honorary director of the Ohio University Library. Dr. Li delivered a paper entitled, “Libraries in the Age of Digital and Network Knowledge.” Another featured guest speaker was Dr. Chin-chih Chen (陳劉欽智), a professor at Boston's Simmons College, who spoke on the topic, “Cultural Resources in the Digital World.” Before the seminar, local and foreign scholars visited libraries across Taiwan to gather input for the meeting.

National Taiwan Library to be Completed in 2003

Construction of the National Taiwan Library finally commenced on March 15, ten years after the project was initially proposed. Education Minister Chao-hsiang Yang (楊朝祥), who presided over the ground-breaking ceremony, noted that while the new library will share the same national status as the NCL, it will largely serve as a repository for books on Taiwanese history.

The ministry first considered moving the library to the Taipei suburb of Chungho from its former location in central Taipei in 1989, but it shelved the plan for various reasons. These bottlenecks were finally overcome, thanks to the effort of Yung-ching Chao (趙永清), Chen-chang Su (蘇貞昌), and Fang-yan Lu (呂芳煙), Yang said.

Founded in 1915 as the Japanese Colonial Government Library, the library was renamed after World War II as the Taiwan Branch of the NCL. Yang noted that, with a collection swelling to over one million volumes, the library had long outgrown its original facilities in Taipei City. The library's new home, located near Chungho Park, Taipei County, will be able to accommodate at least 2.5 million titles, he said.

The 10-floor building (seven above ground and three below) will have over 1.26 million square feet of floor space, including parking for 500 cars. The construction is scheduled to be completed by October 2003.