

# Yearly Report on the Activities of Taiwan Centre

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This year has been very fruitful for the Taiwan Centre in what concerns expanding our relations and means of collaboration with Taiwan, as well as developing our library with much-needed materials in the area of Chinese studies. Moreover, we have hosted and participated in a series of events and conferences that have brought us great benefit both in understanding and improving the ways in which we approach the cultural richness of Taiwan and its people. The following are the most important events that have taken place in the year 2017, and represent a strong promise for even more events to come:

## 1. Expansion of library funds for Chinese studies via Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation



The Centre for Asian Studies and Taiwan Centre has successfully applied for a funding program for expanding the library funds with Chinese-related materials and textbooks. A grant of 9000 USD was issued over three years, from 2017 to 2019, and we have already enriched our catalogue with more than 50 referential books and language textbooks in 2017, with more to follow in the next two years.

*1. Chiang Chink-kuo Foundation expansion of VDU library funds project. 2017-2019.*

## 2. Hosting of Taipei's Mission in Latvia Ambassador Wu Rong-chuan public lecture



In April 25, His Excellency, Ambassador Wu Rong-chuan, performed a visit to VDU Taiwan Centre, followed by a public lecture on Taiwan's burgeoning civil society, which was met with great enthusiasm by both VDU staff and students.

*2. His Excellency, Ambassador Wu Rong-chuan public lecture on Taiwan Civil Society in VDU. April 2017.*

## 3. Training visit to National Chengchi University of Taipei



From August 13 – 26, the National Chengchi University of Taipei organized a training session open for teaching staff in the Baltic Region in order to familiarize them with the academic and cultural specifics of Taiwan and the optimal approach to teaching Chinese abroad. Taiwan Centre staff participated in this project and the results were a much better understanding of Taiwanese culture and life, which will definitely lead to a more efficient interaction between the two parties and a better approach in implementing Taiwan-related projects.

*3. Taiwan Centre Staff member Gheorghe – Alexandru Fratila visiting National Chengchi University for a “Teaching Chinese to Students of Other Languages” training program. August 2017.*

#### 4. Taiwan Puppet Exhibition



In the period of 18-29 October, our Centre has organized and arranged the hosting of Traditional Taiwanese puppets in the public space of Vytautas Magnus University. Full support and guidance was provided by the Taipei Mission in the Republic of Latvia regarding logistics and organization guidelines, and we are happy to inform that the exhibition was a great success and it was another firm step forwards in promoting the highly valuable culture of Taiwan.

4. Our “homemade” poster for the Taiwan Puppet Exhibition hosted in the VDU library hall. October 2017.



5. Traditional Chinese puppets exhibited in VDU. October 2017.

## 5. Conference on Civil Society in East Asia



6. *Headline for the conference on Civil Society in East Asian Countries, where Taiwan had valuable participation. October 2017.*



7. *The first day of the Civil Society in East Asia conference. October 2017.*

The highlight of the season was the conference of Civil Society in East Asia, which was hosted by Vytautas Magnus University in the period of October 26-27. Taiwan Centre was focused entirely on securing the support and collaboration of the Taipei Mission in Latvia in order to provide the highest quality of participants from the Taiwanese part. The results were, as expected, of the highest level – with participants providing very instructive and interesting presentations and with excellent conditions provided to all participants. Professor Li-hsuan Cheng from National Chengchi University of Taipei presented the Social Capital of Taiwan in his keynote speech. In addition, there were other two European scholars, Professor Lara Momesso from the University of Portsmouth and Professor Nora Fee Kroeger from the London School of Economics and Political Science who talked about the Civil Society Development in Taiwan, thus promoting European research

interest in Taiwan. The organization and resulting success of the conference has brought us to a closer collaboration with our Taiwanese counterparts in the Mission of Latvia and has set the grounds for future conferences of the same quality.

## **6. Other Activities**

Beside the main events stated, the Taiwan Centre has also started a Taiwan Club and we are presently looking for new and active membership, in order to involve the students of Vytautas Magnus University into the active role of cultural exchange between Taiwan and Lithuania and to organize Taiwan-related events.

During the first semester of 2017, exchange students from Taiwan have provided, in collaboration with Taiwan Centre staff, the option to view the official Centre for Asian Studies webpage in Traditional Chinese Characters. Special thanks go to the student Lareina Cheng for this achievement.

In the upcoming Asian Week of March 2018, Taiwan Centre has already secured the participation of the Taiwanese part in the Food and Culture day, which we see as a great opportunity for our students to get better acquainted with traditional Taiwanese food and customs.