

The nationality of several Taiwanese authors has been listed as Chinese in the Chinese Name Authority Joint Database Search System, a collaborative project between libraries from both sides of the Taiwan Strait to standardize the names of people, groups, meetings and other bodies.

Different Chinese-language authors often share a name and the use of pen names is common, so the National Library of China, the Administrative Center of China's Academic Library & Information System and other agencies in 2003 established the Cooperative Committee for Chinese Name Authority to settle the confusion and create a standard format for cataloging.

In the following year, the National Central Library (NCL) joined the committee under the name "Taiwan Center for Chinese Studies."

The committee in 2009 created the database search system, which is open to the public in Taiwan, China and elsewhere.

However, the nationality of several Taiwanese authors is listed as Chinese on the database, including that of former president Lee Teng-hui (李登輝), newly appointed Control Yuan member Chen Shih-meng (陳希萌), Judicial Yuan President Hsu Tzong-li (許宗力) and National Chengchi University Graduate Institute of Taiwanese Literature professor Chen Fang-ming (陳芳明).

The NCL from the onset knew that there were many differences between the two sides, but still hoped to find common ground while maintaining their differences, NCL Bibliographic Information Center director Hsu Ching-fen (許清芬) said earlier this week.

The cooperation guidelines do not stipulate whether to include a nationality column, Hsu said, adding that China has always included one, but Taiwan's materials do not.

Hsu said the nationality changes were "uncomfortable to see, but there is nothing that can be done."

The NCL every year sends members to attend the committee and shares the cost of maintaining the system.

The committee is expected to convene in the second half of this year at the National Library of China in Beijing.

“China is taking advantage of Taiwan,” Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Legislator Huang Kuo-shu (黃國書) said, adding that the NCL had joined the project to establish a cataloging standard, but has instead created an even larger error: an incorrect understanding in the international community.

“Under these circumstances, what value is left in Taiwan collaborating with China?” Huang asked.

Taiwan’s status was dwarfed, yet the NCL still cooperated and did not protest or request that the nationalities be changed, DPP Legislator Lin Chun-hsien (林春雄) said.

China says that the system is to also join the Virtual International Authority File, an international database to which several national libraries around the world — including the NCL, the US Library of Congress, the German National Library and the National Library of France — have contributed.

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