

OPENING ADDRESS TO THE  
17TH ANNUAL CONGRESS  
OF THE  
INDO-PACIFIC PREHISTORY ASSOCIATION, 2002

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is my great honour to attend this opening ceremony of the 17th Congress of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association (IPPA). I would like to extend my sincere welcome to you. The Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association is one of the most important academic organizations in the region. The objectives of IPPA are not only to promote cooperation and scholarly exchange in the study of the prehistory of East Asia and the Pacific region, but also to assist in the Asia-Pacific region to conserve and protect cultural heritage. As a governmental agency with the mission of promoting academic research and international exchange, the National Science Council would like to support fully this 17th Congress of IPPA, along with other such international academic organizations. We sincerely hope that the scholars coming from abroad will take this opportunity to understand more about the prehistory of Taiwan.

The island of Taiwan presents an abundance of prehistoric sites. So far as I know, more than a thousand have already been discovered in Taiwan, and with those that are still buried there are surely many more. For example, during recent development of the Tainan Science-based Industrial Park, eight archaeological sites were discovered. Archaeologists from Academia Sinica were asked to conduct

salvage work at these sites, and a large number of prehistoric cultural and ecological remains, which have been dated between 5000 and 350 years before present, were excavated.

These prehistoric cultural remains provide us with not only very important data for the understanding of Taiwan, but are also of great significance for many of the academic problems in the cultural history of East and Southeast Asia. For instance, Taiwan has long been hypothesized as a major homeland of the Austronesian-speaking people who dispersed from southeast China to Island Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

The National Science Council has shown much concern for developments in the humanities and social sciences, and has provided support for archaeological and anthropological research. Annually, the Council supports more than 20 such academic projects. Still, however, the academic community of anthropology and archaeology in Taiwan is insufficient in its number of scholars. It is our hope that the IPPA 17th Congress will attract the public and encourage students to study prehistory.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the attending scholars for their contribution in making a successful 17th Congress. I hope you will all have a good stay in Taiwan.