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 pre-
historic 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. Archae-
ologists 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 anthropo-
logical 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.