

發現臺灣 DISCOVERING TAIWAN

naturalists, reviewing the discoveries of natural history, explorers and a tradition of investigation that have shaped the appearance of NTM and built the foundation of its present collection. Therefore, it is not a natural history exhibition that introduces Taiwan's natural world but one that looks back at how Taiwan's natural world has been "discovered" by modern natural history. It has thus been titled "Discovering Taiwan."

The contents of *Discovering Taiwan* are divided into three major sections: The Path to Discovery, Taiwan's New Scope, and The Past is the Future.

Hotsuma Ozaki among the collected aboriginal artifacts



COLLECTION IN RETROSPECT

Pioneer in Archaeological Investigation

Ushinosuke Mori was also a pioneer in archaeological prehistory. He discovered a great number of archaeological sites, and Amis tribal areas independently or collaboratively. He was the first person who discovered the megalithic culture on Taiwan. At that time, however, archaeological research had yet to be conducted. His discovery was accompanied mainly by surface collecting, drawings, and photographs. In his "Distribution of Sites" map Mori drawn up in the museum in the 1920s, prehistoric sites he had surveyed in Taiwan. In addition, Mori also included descriptions of archaeological sites of indigenous peoples.

Prehistoric stone tools collected by Ushinosuke Mori

Discovering Taiwan: The Permanent Exhibition of the New Century, National Taiwan Museum-Episode I is also a retrospective exhibition of the museum collection. It totally displays 367 pieces of specimens and artifacts in natural history, of which 265 objects are from the NTM collection. Among these 265 objects, many are historical specimens collected and labeled by renowned discoverers personally, such as the Atayal long garment, prehistoric stone wares, and bird specimens, which were collected by Ushinosuke Mori and Yonetaro Kikuchi in the early 20th century. There are also some objects, which were not collected by famous naturalists, making their "historical debut" in the exhibition, such as the shell bead anklets of Mona Rudao, a recent find, collected by the Sakuma Foundation in the late 1920s.

Meanwhile, in order to faithfully represent the collection and acquisition context of these "specimens" as collection/exhibit objects, many "historical labels" from the time of collection or acquisition are "exceptionally" displayed along with their "owners," which from a close look still show discernibly the handwriting by some famous collectors such as Ushinosuke Mori, Yohachiro Okamoto, and Yasuichi Horikawa.

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THE PERMANENT EXHIBITION OF THE NEW CENTURY
NATIONAL TAIWAN MUSEUM
• Episode I •

發現臺灣

RE-VISITING THE AGE OF NATURAL HISTORY
AND NATURALISTS OF TAIWAN



DISCOVERING TAIWAN

INTRODUCTION

Discovering Taiwan: The Permanent Exhibition of the New Century, National Taiwan Museum-Episode I is the first brand-new permanent installment by the National Taiwan Museum (NTM) since the 21st century, which is also the first venture of the three permanent exhibitions that will be successively presented by the NTM as planned. This exhibition turns the clock back to the origin of the NTM when it was initially founded as Taiwan Viceroy's Office Museum in the early 20th century around a hundred years ago. It traces an age of discovery for the emergence of Taiwan's natural history and



THE PATH TO DISCOVERY



The first section, The Path to Discovery, focuses on the investigation tradition of the early 20th-century naturalists. Through the field stories and gathering of two legendary collectors, Ushinosuke Mori and Yonetaro Kikuchi, it portrays a tradition that emphasized first-hand encounters as “walking the path of knowledge” for the naturalists at that time.

On the other hand, the on-site material evidence gathered by field researchers has formed “a world of specimens” for the museum. Specimens are not souvenirs of an investigation, but are samples of species. An assembly of various specimens creates a micro natural world in the museum, representing the taxonomic classification and evolutionary order of natural species. Therefore, “discovering the natural order among specimens” forms another important feature of the natural history tradition at that time, which is the second subject of this section.



The Path to Discovery Taiwan's New Scope The Past is the Future

TAIWAN'S NEW SCOPE



Jian-Shan Chen's *A Synopsis of the Vertebrates of Taiwan* and his fish collection

The second section of this exhibition, Taiwan's New Scope, details the important naturalists and their significant findings in the history of NTM by means of special topics. For example, the first director Takiya Kawakami led the investigation of Taiwan's high mountain plants. Tokuichi Shiraki, a pioneer of Taiwan's entomology, discovered the broad-tail swallowtail. Yonetaro Kikuchi, a legendary specimen collector of the museum, gathered the Mikado pheasant. Yohachiro Okamoto, an innovator of Taiwan's mineralogy, identified the Hokutolite. Yashuichi Horikawa, an all-round naturalist, collected shell specimens and discovered a new species of snail: *Stereophaedusa horikawai*. The first postwar director Jian-Shan Chen and his student Run-Sheng Liang gathered the National

Treasure Fish: Formosan landlocked salmon. Hotsuma Ozaki, a unique historic naturalist, collected indigenous rattan wares and shell-bead garments. And in the 1910s, Ushinosuke Mori instructed the production of Hakata Figurines for Taiwan's indigenous tribes. In the late 1920s, the Sakuma Foundation Collection was acquired. In the 1960s, the deep-sea living fossil, Rumphius' slit shell, created a sensation. In the 1970s, Hayasaka's rhinoceros, a great discovery in Taiwan's fossil research, were excavated. All the major discoverers and findings in the history of NTM grace this exhibit section with their presence.



Mikado Pheasant

Reconstructed skeleton of the *Rhinoceros sinensis hayasakai*

THE PAST IS THE FUTURE



Finally, the third section of this exhibition, The Past is the Future, starts with a question: what do these historical specimens in the collection of NTM mean for the contemporary era? In other words, will the museum's specimens as reminders of the past also lead us to contemplate the present or even look ahead to the future? This exhibition responds to this question with three objects. The first is a specimen of Formosan clouded leopard. The wild population of Formosan clouded leopard was officially declared extinct in 2014. Thus, the Formosan clouded leopard specimens preserved by the museum are not only historical records of a past species but also a key to the future, offering possible clues for future reproduction through their genetic information.

On the other hand, old specimens of the museum may also provide sufficient materials and inspiration for contemporary creators. The last two “specimens” of this exhibition are “works” by contemporary artists: *New Texture of Ancestors' Rainbow Bridge* by Atayal textile artist Yuma Taru and *The Past is the Future* by multi-media artist Jun-Jieh Wang, which were respectively inspired by the patterns of old textile artifacts and the forms of various specimens in the museum into two uniquely ingenious installation artworks featuring a fusion of the old and new. In the museum, the “past” is the “future.”