

## **The First Taiwan Lecture on Chinese Studies to be Held in Oceania is a Great Success**

The last Taiwan Lecture on Chinese Studies of 2015 was successfully held by the National Central Library (NCL) of Taiwan in partnership with the Australian National University (ANU) at the latter's China in the World Centre on December 14, 2015. This was the two institutions' first academic collaboration since they jointly established a Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies (TRCCS) at ANU on November 11, 2015. This lecture, the first Taiwan Lecture on Chinese Studies to take place in Oceania, was a satisfactory ending to the year's Taiwan Lectures series.

Prof. Kam Louie of the School of Humanities and Languages at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), who is also an honorary professor in the School of Chinese at the University of Hong Kong, was invited to give the lecture. Ms. Roxanne Missingham, University Librarian at ANU Library, moderated the lecture, entitled "Masculinity, Homo-Sociality/Sexuality and Class: Reflections on Two Late-Imperial Novels." Mr. Bi Tzu-an, Director of the Education Division, Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECO) in Australia gave an introductory speech and assisted with the day's proceedings, demonstrating the great importance the TECO attached to this event.

In his lecture, Prof. Louie explored how male same-sex attractions are depicted in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *Dream of the Red Chamber*, two of the most important novels of late imperial China. The characters in these very different novels represent diametrically opposed ideals of manhood in traditional China. He examined these representations by focusing on the homo-sociality of Guan Yu and Jia Baoyu, the protagonists of these novels, while drawing out the class implications of their behavior. Although a major theme of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is homo-sociality, the homosexuality this conceals is often repressed. In particular, because of Guan Yu's *wu*

武 credentials, the repression of his homosexuality is a necessary one, as sex becomes a fundamental test to show self-control of a man of martial art. Prof. Louie then turned his attention to the character of Jia Baoyu in *Dream of the Red Chamber*, who comes from an aristocratic background. The ways in which the delicate and feminine Baoyu displays emotion and interacts socially waver between heterosexual and homosexual, but because of his social class his homosexuality can be much less restrained than that of Guan Yu. Prof. Louie's bold conclusion is that the different degrees of the repression of homosexual desire in the two novels are by no means accidental. The difference demonstrates the clear division between classes in traditional Chinese society. The characters are ruled by the value systems of their respective social classes, even in their intimate relationships.

Prof. Louie's lecture displayed his many years of research into modern and contemporary Chinese novels and textual representations of masculinity. The lecture was warmly received by the audience, who raised many questions they wished to discuss with him. It attracted many ANU staff and students, and also a number of scholars of Chinese studies from Canberra and Sydney. After the lecture had concluded, Director Bi Tzu-an of the TECO in Australia offered special thanks to the NCL Center for Chinese Studies for their many years of hard work and dedication in promoting international academic exchanges and partnerships. Their establishment of the Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies and hosting of the Taiwan Lecture on Chinese Studies, he said, had created even more opportunities and resources for staff and students to understand Taiwan's Chinese Studies research and the beauty of Chinese culture. Director Bi also expressed his gratitude to ANU Library for giving their enthusiastic support at the many exchange events this year.

After the lecture, Director Bi screened a short promotional video specially produced by the Center for Chinese Studies. The video briefly introduced the work of the Center, the Research Grant for Foreign Scholars in Chinese Studies, the Taiwan Fellowship, and the various digital resources for Chinese Studies provided by academic

institutions in Taiwan. The aim was to encourage more overseas scholars to apply for financial support to carry out research in Taiwan. The video presentation generated many questions and requests for further information about the research grants.

The NCL's partner in holding this lecture, ANU, is the first institution in Oceania to house a TRCCS. Since 2012, the NCL has set up 18 such Resource Centers at major academic institutions worldwide. Their purpose is to more widely disseminate Taiwan's academic research and publications, strengthen partnerships with Chinese studies institutions around the world, and promote research exchanges.



Roxanne Missingham, University Librarian at ANU Library introduces the speaker, Prof. Kam Louie, and moderates his lecture



Prof. Kam Louie lectures on “Masculinity, Homo-Sociality/Sexuality and Class: Reflections on Two Late-Imperial Novels”



After the lecture, the audience asks the speaker questions



Mr. Bi Tzu-an, Director of the Education Division, Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECO) in Australia attends the lecture and gives an introductory speech



After the lecture, a short promotional video specially produced by the Center for Chinese Studies is screened to introduce Taiwan's digital resources for Chinese Studies.



At the end, staff and students attending the lecture pick up further information for foreign scholars wishing to carry out research in Taiwan.