

The First Taiwan Lectures on Chinese Studies to be Held at the University of Tokyo

The National Central Library's (NCL) Center for Chinese Studies partnered for the first time with the University of Tokyo to hold two Taiwan Lectures on Chinese Studies in the form of mini-conference entitled "Using GIS to Research China." Prof. I-chun Fan, Executive Director of the GIS Center and Research Fellow of the Institute of History and Philology at the Academia Sinica, and Dr. Chihyun Chang, Research Fellow of the Department of History at Shanghai Jiao Tong University were invited to present on the afternoon of November 27, 2015.

Prof. Kawashima Shin of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tokyo moderated the lectures. Mr. Koichi Hori, Assistant Director of the University of Tokyo Library (UTL), and Mr. Lin Shih-ying, Director of the Education Division, Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in Japan both gave introductory speeches in which they emphasized the importance of these lectures to both Japan and Taiwan. Before the two guest speakers took the podium, Dr. Narita Kentaro, appointed researcher of the UTL, reported on the current state of academic exchanges between the UTL and the NCL. He reported that since the establishment by the NCL of a Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies (TRCCS) at the University of Tokyo in the end of 2014, the academic publications gifted to the university had been on display in a special area at the Komaba Library (a branch of the UTL). He went on to describe in detail the IP technology set to access to the NCL's master's and Ph.D. theses, journal articles, ancient books, special collection manuscripts, and its e-publication system. He also reported how online databases provided by other libraries in Taiwan had made research very convenient for staff and students at the university. Once construction of the new Asia Library currently being built on the Hongo campus was complete, he said, the TRCCS would be relocated there. He looked forward to the continued close partnership between the two institutions in the future.

The first lecture, entitled "Geo-spatial Technology Integration of Spatio-temporal Information for and China Studies," was delivered by Prof. I-chun Fan. He revealed how recent

advances in geo-spatial technology, including GIS (Geographic Information Systems), GPS (Global Positioning Systems), and RS (Remote Sensing), have demonstrated its capability of integrating and transforming numerous spatio-temporal data into meaningful information and providing new insights in an intuitive way. He described how applying geo-spatial technology in China-related studies, especially history, greatly expands research possibilities and effectiveness.

As an example of this, he described how the Center for Geographic Information Science (GIS Center) at the Academia Sinica has dedicated itself to developing geo-spatial technology, building up a digital infrastructure and gathering a vast amount of geo-spatial data. The GIS Center has created a system called Chinese Civilization in Time and Space (CCTS) which features 2D, 3D, and 4D platforms that can be used to help conduct research on China. At the same time, the GIS Center continues to gather and digitize various maps and aerial images and to develop value-added applications that effectively utilize these data. The Center's researchers actively collaborate with scholars from different fields, and provide efficient support and service models to meet the needs of interdisciplinary studies. Successful applications currently include research on municipal history, economic history, literary history, Shang and Zhou dynasty bronzes, Mazu temples, and archaeological sites in Taiwan.

The second lecture, delivered by Dr. Chihyun Chang, was entitled "The Opening of the Treaty Ports and the Foreign Expansion in China, 1870-1881: The Spatio-Temporal Presentation by Geographic Information System." Dr. Chang has used GIS to develop a spatio-temporal distribution database in order to faithfully present various data on treaty ports at the end of the Qing dynasty, while clearly showing the patterns of trade of various countries with China. Dr. Chang demonstrated how historians can make use of GIS in their research. By presenting the history of international trade in the 19th century, he provided scholars with an opportunity to re-examine the strengths and weaknesses in China's overseas trade relationships in the late Qing.

The discussant for this lecture, Prof. Mizushima Tsukasa of the Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology at the University of Tokyo, remarked that big data is currently a hot topic, and that we are at a turning point where Western interest in research on Asia has become

important. Besides emphasizing the richness of research content, Asia specialists should also be stressing how to appeal to people by the way research is presented and how to persuade the audience of their research viewpoint? Prof. Mizushima believed GIS to be an effective tool and the comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach taken by the Academia Sinica GIS Center under the leadership of Prof. I-chun Fan to be an extremely successful model.

The conference was well-attended by Japanese researchers of China Studies and University of Tokyo staff and students, who asked many questions of the speakers. The NCL's Center for Chinese Studies distributed information to the audience about Taiwan's digital resources for Chinese Studies and the scholarships it offers to overseas scholars wishing to carry out research in Taiwan.



Lecture moderator Prof. Kawashima Shin of the University of Tokyo



Mr. Koichi Hori, Assistant Director of the University of Tokyo Library gives an introductory speech



Mr. Lin Shih-ying, Director of the Education Division, Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in Japan, gives an introductory speech



Mr. Narita Kentaro of the University of Tokyo Library introduces the Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies



Prof. I-chun Fan of the Academia Sinica delivers his lecture



Dr. Chihyun Chang, Research Fellow of Shanghai Jiao Tong University, delivers his lecture



Discussant, Prof. Tsukasa Mizushima of the University of Tokyo



An enthusiastic audience ask questions and participate in discussion