

Taiwan Lectures on Chinese Studies: Prof. Christopher Lupke Lectures at SOAS on a Taiwanese Anti-Nuclear Documentary

On July 6, 2016, the National Central Library (NCL) of Taiwan held another lecture in its ongoing Taiwan Lectures on Chinese Studies series. On this occasion, Prof. Christopher Lupke was invited to give a talk on Taiwanese Film as part of University of London SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) Centre of Taiwan Studies 2016 summer curriculum. Prof. Dafydd Fell of SOAS moderated the lecture, which was the fourth in the series to be held overseas this year. Ms. Wu Ying-mei, Deputy Director of the NCL, attended the lecture and gave an introductory speech.

Prof. Lupke's lecture was entitled "Decoding Cui Suxin's *Gongliao, How Are You?: Post-verité Documentary and Environmental Activism.*" Christopher Lupke is a professor of Chinese and Cinema Studies at Washington State University. In 2002, he spent a short time carrying out research in Taiwan, with the financial assistance of the NCL's Center for Chinese Studies. He is an expert in Chinese culture, with training in modern and classical Chinese, cultural theory, and film. He continues to have a strong interest in Taiwanese culture and society, as well as in Sinophone Studies in general.

The subject of this lecture was Taiwanese documentary director Cui Suxin's work, *Gongliao, How Are You?* which was screened before the start of the lecture. The film documents protests held by the residents of Gongliao, a fishing village in northern Taiwan, against the construction of Taiwan's fourth nuclear power station. Directly participating in each event through her lens, the director records this protracted anti-nuclear resistance movement that lasted for years. *Gongliao, How Are You?* not only shows the daily lives of local residents during the long protest, more importantly it provides a valuable local perspective on this controversial issue. At the same time, Prof. Lupke pointed out for the audience that this is not merely an environmental protection film, but is also notable for the narrative technique employed: Cui Suxin uses a "second-person" voiceover to narrate her work, addressing a "you" whose identity only becomes clear halfway through the film. This narrative method has a

unique effect on the viewer. Prof. Lupke also pointed out that this documentary had already drawn attention upon its release in 2004; following the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011, however, it became the subject of even more focus and reflection by the Taiwanese academic community and environmental movement.

The NCL partnered with the SOAS to hold this lecture. Previously, the two institutions jointly established a Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies at the school. Nuclear power is currently a key environmental issue, attracting a number of the university's students to attend the lecture. The audience took advantage of the Q&A session at the end to continue exchanging views with Prof. Lupke.



Prof. Dafydd Fell (right) introduces Prof. Christopher Lupke



Prof. Christopher Lupke delivers his lecture



A view of the lecture audience



Lecture attendees ask questions