

## **Prof. Chiu Kuei-fen Gives a Lecture at the University of Malaya**

On November 23, 2017, Taiwan's National Central Library (NCL) and the University of Malaya jointly hosted a Taiwan Lecture on Chinese Studies. Professor Chiu Kuei-fen (邱貴芬) of National Chung Hsing University accepted an invitation to deliver the lecture, which was entitled "Taiwan Literature and World Literature."

The University of Malaya is ranked the number one university in Malaysia, and was the first university in the country to establish a Chinese department. For decades, the university's Department of Chinese Studies has enjoyed close academic ties with many Taiwanese universities, and is one of Southeast Asia's key centers of Chinese teaching and research. In 2015, the University of Malaya became the 15<sup>th</sup> institution to partner with the NCL to establish a Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies (TRCCS). Recently the university has become particularly noted for its more than 6,000-volume collection of Dream of the Red Chamber (紅樓夢) research.

Prof. Chiu Kuei-fen, obtained her Ph.D. in comparative literature at the University of Washington, Seattle, and is currently a distinguished professor in the Graduate Institute of Taiwan Literature and Transnational Cultural Studies at National Chung Hsing University, Taichung. Her main research interests are postcolonial Taiwan literature and contemporary Taiwan documentary film. Besides initiating the establishment of the Li Ang (李昂) and Li Yongping (李永平) digital archives, she and Prof. Zhang Yingjin (張英進) have guest-edited a special issue of *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* on Chinese literature as world literature. She is also responsible for implementing the National Museum of Taiwan Literature's Taiwan Literature Archives project, a digital project focusing on Taiwan's literary history.

In the lecture, Prof. Chiu discussed Taiwan literature in the context of world literature. Taking as her starting point David Damrosch's definition of world literature

as “a mode of circulation and of reading,” and using Taiwan-based Malaysian Chinese literature writer Li Yongping and Taiwanese feminist writer Li Ang as examples, Prof. Chiu explained how the study of Taiwan literature in the context of world literature differs methodologically from sinophone literary studies and world literature in Chinese. She suggested that an “international recognition index” be created to determine the world literature status of a writer, rather than simply rely on a few readers’ subjective interpretations of their works. In her lecture, Prof. Chiu drew upon Li Yongpin’s and Li Ang’s digital archives, which form part of the Taiwan Literature Archives Project (<http://twlit.blogspot.tw/>) established in 2014 by National Chung Hsing University, to explain how she evaluates world literature and world literature writers. She also explained how world literature studies explores how these works take on a new life as they become widely read around the world, and how this new life is possible as these works ferment and are remolded in new cultural contexts.

The lecture was moderated by Prof. Teoh Hooi See (張惠思) of the Department of Chinese Studies at the University of Malaya. Also in attendance were Mahbob Yusof, acting chief librarian of the University of Malaya Library; Fan Pik Wah (潘碧華), director of the Department of Chinese Studies, which jointly planned and hosted the event; and also Chu To-ming (朱多文, director) and Pai Bo-wen (白博文, secretary) of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in Malaysia’s Education Division. The event attracted many staff and students from the Department of Chinese Studies and Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, as well many local Chinese Studies teachers, all of whom contributed to an atmosphere of animated discussion.

Besides the lecture, on November 25 and 26, an in-depth exploration of important research themes in global Chinese Studies was held, organized by the NCL and Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). The two institutions jointly hosted an international conference on “The Sinophone and Writing Southeast Asia: Literary and Cultural Representations from Taiwan, Malaysia, and Singapore,” which was attended by 15 scholars from related fields from Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore. There were a total of 14 conference papers, a discussion forum, and 6 discussants, as well as a lecture by

Academician David Der-wei Wang. Conference themes included the three regions' (Taiwan, Malaysia, and Singapore) relationships with Southeast Asian literature, and topics relating to the planning of educational and cultural exchanges, so as to show the long term interplay between Taiwan and Malaysia in politics, economics, culture, and education.



Prof. Chiu Kuei-fen delivers her lecture



**L to R:** Huang Wen-te, head of the CCS Liaison Division; Chu To-ming, director of the TECO in Malaysia's Education Division; Mahbob Yusof, acting chief librarian of the University of Malaya Library; Fan Pik Wah, director of the Department of Chinese Studies; Prof. Chiu Kuei-fen, speaker; Prof. Teoh Hooi See, moderator



Prof. Teoh Hooi See and Prof. Chiu Kuei-fen participate in a post-lecture audience discussion