

Prof. Chu Ping-tzu Gives a Taiwan Lecture on Chinese Studies at Yonsei University, South Korea

The National Central Library's Center for Chinese Studies (CCS) and Yonsei University (延世大學) in South Korea partnered to host the fourth Taiwan Lecture on Chinese Studies of the year at the university's Helinox Hall on June 29, 2018. The hosts invited Prof. Chu Ping-tzu (祝平次) of National Tsing Hua University's Department of Chinese Literature to deliver the lecture. The theme of the lecture was "Research and Education in the Digital Humanities of Taiwan: Current Developments and Predicaments."

One of Korea's oldest universities, Yonsei University has also long been ranked among the country's top academic institutions. The National Central Library worked with the university in 2016 to establish a Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies (TRCCS) which provides access to Taiwan's highest quality Chinese Studies research resources. The lecture was the first in the ongoing Taiwan Lecture on Chinese Studies series to be held at the university.

Prof. Chu Ping-tzu obtained his Ph.D. from Harvard University in the United States, and is currently an associate professor in the Department of Chinese Studies at National Tsing Hua University in Hsinchu, Taiwan. Though his main research interests are Neo-Confucianism and Confucian ethics, he has also long been involved in researching and promoting the digital humanities. The lecture was moderated by Prof. Kim Hyun Cheol (金鉉哲) of Yonsei University's Department of Chinese Language and Literature. Due to the majority of the audience being Chinese Department staff and students, the lecture was conducted in Chinese.

In his lecture, Prof. Chu explained what the digital humanities are and asked why we do them. He also recounted the history of digital humanities in Taiwan, from the full-text database era, through the digital archive era, to the current digital humanities era, and introduced some of the main institutions involved in the development of Taiwan's digital humanities—NTU Research Center for Digital Humanities, Academia

Sinica Center for Digital Cultures, and Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts—and the digital research platforms they have built. He then cited some real examples of digital tools his students use for digital humanities research, in order to encourage the audience to try them out.

The professor highlighted the fact that digital humanities in Taiwan began relatively early, in about 1984. Since then, research institutions such as the Academia Sinica, National Taiwan University, and Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts have established their own digital humanities projects, and built a number of databases or searchable digital texts. It is upon this foundation that these institutions are developing future digital humanities. However, institutions lack sufficient funding to develop digital humanities research, as well as the full-time specialist research staff they need, making the future of digital humanities uncertain. Currently young Western scholars are becoming increasingly adept at using digital humanities research methods to make their research more persuasive and interesting. But as far as Taiwan's present research environment is concerned, digital humanities research methods are still regarded by most scholars as whimsical; in reality there are only a limited number of scholars who apply digital methods to their research. Prof. Chu summed up by identifying the following phenomena present in Taiwan's digital humanities: An unclear government attitude towards funding; markedly increasing international influence; an identity crisis among humanities scholars; the increasing openness of teaching and research institutes; the freedom of use of online tools; the self-empowerment of individual scholars.

Around the world, digital humanities research methods are seen as quite innovative, and so the lecture drew an audience of more than 50 faculty and students with a variety of research interests from the Institute of Humanities. They included visiting Prof. Wang Tongwei (王彤偉) from Sichuan University. At the end of the lecture, Prof. Chu was asked for his advice on useful digital tools.

After the lecture, the director of NCL's International Cooperation Division, Ms. Keng Li-chun, made a short speech. She introduced the audience to the TRCCS that had been previously established at Yonsei University, and also the Research Grant for

Foreign Scholars in Chinese Studies and Taiwan Fellowship programs administered by CCS, available to foreign scholars wishing to conduct research in Taiwan. These are all aimed at promoting the use of Taiwan's academic resources overseas, in the process strengthening international exchanges and enhancing Taiwan's research strengths.



Prof. Chu Ping-tzu delivers the lecture



This Taiwan Lecture on Chinese Studies, held at Yonsei University, was moderated by

Prof. Kim Hyun Cheol



The lecture drew an audience of around 50 Yonsei University faculty and students



The audience eagerly participated in the discussion. Pictured asking a question is visiting professor Wang Tongwei of Sichuan University



Director Keng Li-chun gives a short speech introducing Taiwan's academic resources, including the Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies



Post-lecture group photograph