

## **Taiwan Lecture in Malaysia**

### **– Part II: Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman**

The fourth Taiwan Lecture in 2015 took place in Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman on July 15. It is another successful collaboration between National Central Library (R.O.C., Taiwan) and worldwide renowned academic institutions. Back in 2014, National Central Library signed up a memorandum of Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies with Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, and this marks the first TRCCS set up in South-East Asia. Since then, the collaboration between both sides has been intensified, and both sides have collaborated in many important projects since then. This time, National Central Library invited Professor Yi-Long Huang to give a lecture, of which the topic is called “the Line between Historical Fact and Legend: is Fuk'anggan Qianlong's Illegitimate Son?”

Professor Yi-Long Huang can be regarded as one of the most outstanding and versatile scholar of history in Taiwan. Professor Huang graduated with a Ph.D. Degree in physics in Columbia University, and he soon became Dr. HU Shih Visiting Chair for Chinese Studies in Leiden University. Throughout his outstanding academic career, Professor Huang has won innumerable great awards for his excellent research results, including the Award for Outstanding Research from National Science Council, Taiwan Award for Lifetime Academic Achievement from Ministry of Education. Professor Huang then became the Full Professor of the Institute of History in Tsing Hua University, Taiwan, as well as Honorary Professor in Hong Kong University. Recently, Professor Huang was not only honored as the Academician of Academia Sinica, the highest honor for a scholar in humanity but also as the Distinguished Chair

Professor of Humanities and Social Sciences in Tsing Hua University, Taiwan.

The lecture was moderated by Professor Wong Wun Bin, the Director of the Centre for Chinese Studies of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman. The opening remarks were also delivered by Prof. Dr. Ir. Lee Sze Wei, the Vice President of UTAR, as well as Shu-hsien Tseng, Director General of the National Central Library. Prof. Dr. Ir. Lee Sze Wei conveyed his sincere gratitude of NCL setting up a TRCCS in UTAR, which has been significantly benefited from the abundance of research resources provided by the National Central Library. Prof. Dr. Ir. Lee Sze Wei also expressed his great interest in Professor Yi-Long Huang's application of the Big Data to the research of traditional texts and folklores. The Director General of the National Central Library, Shu-hsien Tseng, on her part, offered a special gift: "Annotated Poetry of Su Dongpo." This is the replica of a national treasure of the Republic of China with more than eight hundred years of history. This gift will certainly enrich the collections of UTAR Library and is a witness to a historic moment of mutual cooperation opening up opportunities for future cooperation.

In the lecture, Professor Academician Huang fully exemplifies the use of e-research tools of the modern era, highlighting the tremendous impact and challenges of the information explosion era on the research of Chinese Studies. Professor Huang obtained his PhD degree in physics in Columbia University, but later on he devoted himself to the study of history. In other words, Professor Huang specializes in the study of not only the history of technology but also that of astronomy, as well as of literature. In recent years, Professor Huang dedicated himself to the application of electronic databases to the study of Chinese literary canons, especially *the Dream of the Red Chamber*. In his study of *the Red Chamber*, Professor Huang became acquainted with the historical figure Fuk'anggan (Chinese: 福康安), the son of

Fuheng (Chinese: 傅恒), who is the brother of the Empress Xiaoxianchun and served as a grand minister of state during the middle years of the reign of the Qianlong Emperor. Throughout Qianlong's reign, Fuk'anggan had held various offices including Governor-General, Viceroy of Liangjiang and Viceroy of Liangguang, and he is regarded as a very important figure in Qing Dynasty. In the famous Taiwanese television costume drama *My Fair Princess*, also known as *Return of the Pearl Princess* or *Princess Returning Pearl* (Chinese: 還珠格格), the character of Fu Erkang (Chinese: 爾康), the most handsome and well-known male character played by the most attractive actor, is derived precisely from this historical figure. Through many concrete examples, Professor Huang in the lecture explores the issue of whether Fuk'anggan is Emperor Qianlong's illegitimate son, as this issue has been central to the gossiping and speculation for people who are interested in Qing Dynasty. In exploring this issue, Professor Huang shares with his audience how he fully uses research tools of e-technology and creates new model of asking the right research questions. The answers, as Professor Academician Huang continuously states, can be found when we truly understand how to use big data. We can say that Professor Huang's lecture illuminated the scholars of humanities in the digital age, enlightening them to use big data in order to break through the existing research model, which is rather outdated. If we study the historical documents and other texts with the use of big data, then we can definitely find out the answer to our research question. Furthermore, we can also build up appropriate business model and raise different key questions. Professor Huang's lecture not only shows the accumulation of knowledge in his mind but also the new idea of the use of the technology. In the lecture, Professor Huang discusses the issue of Fuk'anggan's birth through very brilliant dialectics, and he also focuses on the most romantic and affectionate relationship between Qianlong Emperor and his Empress Xiaoxianchun. The audience were all

very touched.

The moderator Professor Wong Wun Bin praised Professor Academician Huang's effort and brilliance in his interdisciplinary research, and it is without doubt that asking the correct question is the only way to academic success. After the lecture, the audience raised many questions enthusiastically, and many of them also expressed that they were all mesmerized by Professor Huang's knowledge. Even after the event came to the conclusion, there were still many people being around Professor Huang and discussing at length with the prestigious Academician from Taiwan.



Professor Academician Yi-Long Huang gave his lecture



The audience listened to Professor Academician Yi-Long Huang's lecture attentively



The Group Photo