

Taiwan Lectures on Chinese Studies in Vietnam: Prof. Wu Tien-tai Lectures on Taiwan's Indigenous Education Policy

On the morning of April 27, 2017, this year's first Taiwan Lecture on Chinese Studies was held by the National Central Library (NCL) in partnership with Vietnam National University Hochiminh City's University of Social Sciences and Humanities. Professor Wu Tien-tai of the Department of Ethnic Relations and Cultures at National Dong Hwa University was invited to deliver a lecture at the university, entitled "The Cultural Practice of Taiwan's Indigenous Education Policy."

This was the first Taiwan Lecture for Chinese Studies to be held in Vietnam. The lecture's joint host, VNU Hochiminh City's University of Social Sciences and Humanities, was also one of the overseas partners that NCL worked with to establish a Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies (TRCCS) in 2013.

The speaker, Prof. Wu Tien-tai, obtained her Ph.D. in Anthropology from Ohio State University, U.S.A. She currently works in the Department of Ethnic Relations and Cultures at National Dong Hwa University, Hualien. Her main research interests include cultural anthropology, educational anthropology, indigenous education, and gender and cultural studies. Prof. Wu has long been interested in education and gender issues in Taiwan's indigenous groups. She has contributed to the planning of Dong Hwa University's College of Indigenous Studies and is consulted by the government on related policy matters.

Prof. Wu delivered her lecture in Chinese, which was translated into Vietnamese for the audience by Dr. Nguyen Hoang-yen, deputy head of the Office of Scientific Research and Project Management at VNU Hochiminh City's University of Social Sciences and Humanities. She began by briefly outlining Taiwan's different indigenous groups, their populations and distributions, related laws, and institutions governing indigenous education on local and national levels. She then recounted her long contribution to and experience with indigenous Taiwanese education. Finally, referring to the focus and objectives of the Ministry of Education's five year development plan

for indigenous education, she reflected on the current process of passing down and learning indigenous cultural knowledge. Prof. Wu argued that to research indigenous peoples, scholars should approach indigenous culture as a subject, and by relaxing the divisions between academic disciplines, allow a complete picture of indigenous knowledge to emerge. In particular, with regard to the indigenous cultural curriculum presently used in higher education, Prof. Wu proposed an integrated culturally-responsive teaching model, explaining the importance of undertaking teaching, research, and service provision with a spirit of learning from indigenous communities. Citing the Service Learning program she had designed for Dong Hwa University in 2013 as an example, she explained that she had tried to give consideration to both indigenous community service provision and student education. She described how, when focusing on the Rinahem Amis community, staff and students observed and interviewed community members to try to identify where students should best focus their efforts to serve indigenous communities, while at the same time learning from the experience. Prof. Wu emphasized that, in working together, both indigenous communities and the college should first reach a consensus, then plan and execute together; the importance and necessity of sharing research data and findings should be even more strongly underlined.

The director of the Department of Oriental Studies at VNU Hochiminh City's University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Prof. Ho Minh Quang, moderated the lecture. Liang Kuang-chung, director of Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, Hochiminh City, made a brief introduction. The university's vice-president was also in attendance. An audience of around 100 packed the auditorium, including a number of students from the Departments of Oriental Studies, Chinese Linguistics and Literature, and Anthropology. The room was filled to capacity, and so extra seating had to be brought in at the back.

At the very end of the lecture, director of the National Central Library's International Cooperation Division, Ms. Keng Li-chun, screened a short video in English specially created for the Taiwan Lectures in Chinese Studies series. The video

introduced Chinese studies research resources produced in Taiwan. Besides briefly describing the services offered by the Center for Chinese Studies, it also informed the audience about the Research Grant for Foreign Scholars in Chinese Studies, the Taiwan Fellowship, and the various electronic Chinese studies resources produced by Taiwan's academic institutions. It is hoped that this will encourage foreign scholars around the world to apply to conduct research in Taiwan, which will help increase the quantity and quality of Taiwanese research.



Liang Kuang-chung, director of the Taipei Education and Cultural Office (TECO) in Hochiminh city, introduces the lecture



Director of the Department of Oriental Studies at VNU Hochiminh City's University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Prof. Ho Minh Quang, moderates the lecture



Prof. Wu Tien-tai delivers her lecture



Vice-president of VNU Hochiminh City's University of Social Sciences and Humanities (2nd left)



Audience fills the room to capacity to listen to the lecture



Director Keng Li-chun (1st left); Director Liang Kuang-chung (3rd left); Prof. Wu Tien-tai (4th left); Director Ho Minh Quang (1st right)