

Professor Max K. W. Huang Lectures at the National Széchenyi Library, Hungary: “Admired by Scholars and Laymen Alike: Introducing Some Classics in Chinese Society”

On October 15, 2016, the National Central Library (NCL) of Taiwan partnered with the National Széchenyi Library, Hungary, to hold a Taiwan Lecture on Chinese Studies in Budapest. Prof. Max K. W. Huang gave a lecture on the Chinese classics, the sixth in the series to be held overseas this year. The auditorium was packed, with close to 200 people attending the lecture. The NCL's Director-General Ms. Tseng Shu-hsien moderated the lecture, which was introduced by Mr. Tao Wen-lung, Head of the Taipei Representative Office in Hungary, and Mr. László Vizi, Head of the Department of Cultural Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hungary.

Prof. Huang's lecture was entitled “Admired by Scholars and Laymen Alike: Introducing Some Classics in Chinese Society.” Max K.W. Huang is a distinguished research fellow of the Institute of Modern History at the Academia Sinica. His main fields of research are Ming and Qing studies and modern Chinese intellectual history. He is the author of six books and more than 80 scholarly articles on subjects such as Ming and Qing cultural history, Yan Fu, Liang Qichao, Hu Shi, and Chiang Kai-shek.

The theme of this lecture was the traditional Chinese classics, particularly those that have been translated into English and Hungarian. This theme was specially chosen to complement the opening of the exhibition, entitled “The Imprint of Civilization: The Amazing Journey of Books,” also jointly hosted by the two institutions. In order to help the audience better understand and appreciate the Chinese classics, the NCL provided a number of representative Hungarian translations such as *The Analects* and *Dream of the Red Chamber* to pass around the auditorium.

Prof. Huang defined the meaning of the term “classic” as a work that has remained highly influential for a long period. Traditional Chinese culture has produced many

texts that can be listed among the Chinese classics. These include not only books of a philosophical flavor, but also works of literature and history that are regarded as beautifully written, or that have complex plots. Drawing on his personal experience, Prof. Huang introduced a selection of Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist classics, such as the *Analects*, the *Daodejing*, and some representative Buddhist scriptures. He then introduced classics of literature and history, such as the *Records of the Grand Historian*, *Tang Poems*, *Anthology of Essays Written in Literary Chinese (Guwen guan zhi)*, *Journey to the West*, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and the *Plum in the Golden Vase*. He also explained how these traditional classics were read, and how they influenced the behavior and values of modern generations. Finally, Prof. Huang explained how these works are like windows into Chinese culture, through which we can understand its ancient and enduring vitality.

In the Q&A session after the lecture, the audience participated in lively discussions with Prof. Huang. A ceremony was then held to mark the opening of the exhibition, which is open to the public from October 18 to December 15, 2016. Director-General of the National Széchényi Library Mr. László Tüske remarked that the people of Hungary were especially interested in Eastern culture, and that jointly hosting a series of events like these would continue to deepen cultural and academic exchanges between Taiwan and Hungary.



The guest speaker, Prof. Max K. W. Huang.



NCL Director-General Ms. Tseng Shu-hsien gives an introductory speech



Left to right: Guest speaker, Prof. Max K. W. Huang; Head of the Taipei Representative Office in Hungary, Mr. Tao Wen-lung; Director-General of the National Széchényi Library, Mr. László Tüske; Head of the Department of Cultural Diplomacy, Mr. László Vizi; Director-General of the NCL, Ms. Tseng Shu-hsien



A view of the attending audience



Cutting the ribbon at the opening ceremony for the exhibition “The Imprint of Civilization: The Amazing Journey of Books”