

Prof. Lee Hsien-chung Delivers a Taiwan Lecture on Chinese Studies at the University of Ljubljana

On May 10, 2018, the National Central Library (NCL) and University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, co-hosted the second Taiwan Lecture on Chinese Studies of the year at the university. The hosts invited Prof. Lee Hsien-chung (李賢中) of National Taiwan University's Department of Philosophy to give the lecture, entitled "Study on Pre-Qin Confucianism and Mohism from the Perspective of Thought Units."

The University of Ljubljana is one of southeastern Europe's important centers for Chinese Studies research. To enhance academic exchanges in Chinese Studies between Taiwan and this region, in 2017 the NCL partnered with the university to establish a Taiwan Resource Center on Chinese Studies there, in order to provide scholars in Slovenia and across southeastern Europe with access to Taiwan's highest quality Chinese Studies research resources. Since 2014, seven Slovenian scholars from the University of Ljubljana have obtained financial support for foreign scholars from the Center for Chinese Studies. This two-way cooperation and exchange has had a very positive impact on disseminating Taiwanese culture and Chinese Studies research in Slovenia.

Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana, Roman Kuhar, moderated the lecture. NCL director-general, Ms. Tseng Shu-hsien, and renowned Slovenian sinologist, Jana S. Rošker, also attended and gave short speeches welcoming Prof. Lee Hsien-chung, and expressing their sincere expectations for future cooperation between the two institutions.

Prof. Lee Hsien-chung used the lecture to introduce thought units and their application to studying Chinese philosophy to the Slovenian audience. Prof. Lee analyzed the internal structure of thought units, distinguishing three layers: situation construction, situation processing, and situational harmony. He then explained that these three layers can then be subdivided into many related factors, such as mastery of the phenomenon, positioning of the meaning, anticipation of development, and intent

of the thinker. After completing his structural analysis, Prof. Lee went on to explain that reasoning in thought units must use “reason that is depended on” and “reason that is accorded to.” The former refers to logical methods, such as deduction and induction, while the latter refers to theories of ethics, the law, and psychology.

In the second part of his lecture, Prof. Lee used an example from his research to explain his thought unit methodology. As examples, he explored views of human nature and ethics in Confucian and Mohist philosophies, and explained Mengzi’s and Xunzi’s respective beliefs in the innate goodness and innate evil of human nature. He also illustrated the similarities, differences and connections between Confucius’ concept of benevolence and Mozi’s concept of universal love, and attempted to show how Confucian and Mohist philosophy might be integrated in a larger thought unit.

This lecture coincided with the opening of the University of Ljubljana East Asia Resource Library. More than 50 people attended the lecture, and at the end many of the audience took the opportunity to ask the speaker questions. This led to animated discussion of the content of Prof. Lee’s lecture and about ways to systematically reconstruct traditional Chinese philosophy using thought units.

After the lecture, Director-General Tseng and her colleagues attended the opening ceremony for the University of Ljubljana East Asia Resource Library. Planning and preparations for the library took several years, building a collection that focuses on academic publications from Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and China. The National Central Library’s attendance at this important ceremony not only symbolized the solid academic exchanges that exist between Taiwan and Slovenia, but also the commitment to strengthen and expand the foundation for future such exchanges between the two countries and southeastern Europe.



L to R: Prof. Jana S. Rošker, Prof. Lee Hsien-chung, Director-General Tseng Shu-hsien, and Prof. Natasia Vampelj Suhadolnik



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