

Taiwan Lecture Held in the Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences

On August 24, 2015, the Center for Chinese Studies of National Central Library (Taiwan, ROC) held the fifth “Taiwan Lecture” of 2015 in collaboration with the Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences. Invited to give the lecture was Professor Dr. Siao-chen Hu, and the topic is “Burning the Midnight Oil – The Making of Verse Narrative Texts by Qing Women.” Professor Hu obtained her Ph.D. degree in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. She specializes in the study of Ming-Qing narrative literature, Ming-Qing women’s literature, and late Qing and Republican literature. Professor Hu currently holds the position of the Research Fellow and the Director of the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy at Academia Sinica, Taiwan, ROC. During the successful lecture, Professor Hu explicated the reading, writing, transcription, as well as the circulation and the publication of *tanci* – a particular form of performing art popular in southern China during the late imperial period.

The lecture has been highly anticipated and greatly assisted by Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Prague, Czech Republic. Ambassador Sheau-jung Lu was invited to the lecture and gave a brief remark. In his remark, Ambassador Lu expressed his appreciation of the efforts of the Center for Chinese Studies of National Central Library not only in encouraging scholars of Chinese Studies around the world to exchange their academic contributions but also in providing a chance for foreign scholars to appreciate the research achievements of Chinese Studies in Taiwan as well as the beauty of Chinese culture. Ambassador Lu also expressed specifically his gratitude for the long-lasting friendship and support of the Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Ondrej Klimes was the moderator of the lecture, and Dr. Ondrej Beranek – the Director of the Oriental Institute – also gave a welcoming remark. In his remark, Dr. Beranek talked about the establishment of Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies (TRCCS) in the Oriental Institute by the National Central Library in 2014. As Dr. Beranek points out, TRCCS provides many outstanding academic publications as well as electronic resources from Taiwan, enriching both the physical and the virtual collection of Chinese Studies in the Institute and giving much benefit to the researchers. This December, the Oriental Institute will also establish another division in the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, to enhance the Taiwan-Czech collaboration in academic researches. In addition, the 2016 annual conference of the European Association for Taiwan Studies will also be taking place in the Oriental Institute. It is expected that more than a hundred scholars from Taiwan and many other countries will participate in this event and discuss various topics together in Prague.

In the lecture, Professor Hu explored the reception and production of *Tanci* (彈詞), a particular form of performing art consisting of spoken and sung sections rhymed with seven-character verse and accompanied by string instruments. During the late imperial period,

the narrative structure of *tanci* was borrowed in fiction writing, and these fictional narratives were especially welcomed by female readers/writers that they even wrote their own texts of *Tanci*. The genre thus became a textual space for women's self-expression and literary imagination. In the lecture, Professor Hu focused on the reading, writing, transcription, as well as the circulation and the publication of *tanci* narrative by women and then demonstrated how significant the genre is to our understanding of Chinese literature, especially in terms of its self-awareness in literary creation and the issue of female resistance to / compliance with a male-dominated Chinese society.

The cosponsors this time – the Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences and the National Library of Latvia – are two of the multiple collaborators of the overseas TRCCS; more importantly, they are our most vital partners in the Central Europe. Since 2012, the National Central Library in Taiwan has continuously established numerous TRCCS in collaboration with top universities and prestigious academic institutions around the world, and the total number is 15 by now. The establishment of TRCCS aims to promote the academic research achievements as well as publications in Taiwan and to strengthen academic relationships with international sinology communities in the hope of boosting international research exchanges in Taiwan and Chinese Studies.



Professor Hu delivering her highly inspirational lecture.



Ambassador Sheau-jung Lu gave an opening remark.



The audience were enlightened and very excited.



Ambassador Lu and Professor Hu being invited to visit the Lu Xun Library in OICA.