

The NCL has long maintained close exchange relations with 11 organizations in Russia, including the National Library of Russia and the Institute of Far Eastern Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences. The demand for information on Russia has grown as increasing numbers of people from Taiwan visit Russia for tourism or business. The NCL has started compiling a catalog of Chinese, Russian and English language Russian resources in the library collection to facilitate public access.

CCS News and Activities

CCS Seminars

The Center for Chinese Studies (CCS) held three seminars in December 2006 and January 2007. On December 5, 2006, CCS visiting scholar and assistant professor of history at the University of Calgary, in Alberta, Canada, Dr. David Curtis Wright presented a lecture on "The Battle of Yashan: A World Class Naval Battle between the Song and Yuan Periods." The lecture was presided by Huang Kuan-chung, director of the Institute of History and Philology at Academia Sinica. Dr. Wright believes that the naval battle between the Yuan forces under Chang Hung-fan and the Song forces of Chang Shih-chieh in the seas off Yashan Island in southern China on March 10 to 20, 1279, was the largest naval battle in China's history. However, its importance and scale have been overlooked by both Chinese and foreign historians. The battle involved at least 200,000 soldiers and at over 1,500 ships, making it a world-class naval battle. This was the last battle between the Song and Yuan forces, with the final outcome that Lu Hsiu-fu jumped into the sea with the child emperor, killing both and marking the final end to the Song dynasty.



Dr. David Curtis Wrigh (left) with Director Huang Kuan-chung (Photo by Caesar Tsai)

For the second seminar on January 1, 2007, Dr. Mark Stevenson of the School of Social Sciences at Victoria University of Technology in Australia presented a lecture entitled "A Small Window on the Tibetan People: Changes in Qinghai Tibetan Culture and Society Viewed from Window Lattice Carvings." The seminar was presided by Fung Ming-Chu, chief curator of the Books and Documents Department at the National Palace Museum. From field studies in semi-nomadic, semi-agrarian Tibetan areas of Qinghai, Dr. Stevenson discovered unique customs of life. However, the economies in these areas have undergone changes with the economic reforms and opening measures introduced by China since the 1980s. The rural lifestyle of the communities has also started to experience material changes similar to those occurring in other inland regions of China. One such change is the gradual disappearance of carved wood window lattices as homes make increasing use of glass and lead-framed windows. Illustrating his presentation with photographs taken during his field studies, Dr. Stevenson elaborated on the material changes he witnessed in these communities and their impact on the local culture and society.



Dr. Mark Stevenson (front, far left) with seminar participants (Photo by Caesar Tsai)

The third seminar was held on January 1, 2007. Dr. Cuncun Wu, a CCS visiting scholar and professor of the School of Cultures, Languages & Linguistics at the University of New England in Australia, delivered a lecture entitled, "Not Interested in Beautiful Women, Interested in Beautiful Men: The Late Qing Literati and Their 'Flower-Guides,' Theatrical Tastes and Homoeroticism. The lecture was presided by Dr. Chen Yi-yuan of the Department of Chinese Literature at National Cheng Kung University. During the mid to late period of the Qing dynasty the word "flower guides" had long been used specifically to appraise the beauty of Beijing opera actors playing female roles. Members of the Qing gentry were passionate in writing, printing and collecting these flower guides that were a kind of amorous and sentimental word play. Reading between the lines of the flower guides, one may discover that the people during Qing times treated praise and indecorous relations with actors as a kind of praiseworthy romantic taste. In his studies of the choice of opera's songs and rhythms and editing of flower-guides for opera actors by the gentry and officials in Beijing during the mid to late Qing period, Dr. Wu has revealed that the gentry showed off their power through such activities. He also shows that the interactive influence of the mass media and gentry

culture is emphasized in society and culture, especially in sexual culture, and that amusement trends of this period cannot be viewed in terms of the role of the dramatic arts. (Chinese text by Ms. Kao Te-er)



Dr. Cuncun Wu (front, far left) with seminar participants (Photo by Caesar Tsai)

Reviews

Taipei During the Japanese Occupation Period

The National Central Library released a collection of postcards depicting Taipei during the Japanese occupation period, offering a fascinating glimpse at the history of Taiwan's capital city.

A total of 600 postcards were selected from the NCL's collection of more than 4,000 historic postcards for publication in *Taipei During the Japanese Occupation Period*, which was published in January 2007. The postcards depict a broad range of subjects, from government buildings and public facilities to portraits of daily life in the city. The postcards vividly reflect the socioeconomic, political, and education and other aspects of life in the city and chronicle the city's early development. About one third of the postcards in the collection have never been published before.