On behalf of the Center for Taiwan Studies at UCSB, I would like to welcome all of you who have come from a long way to participate in this conference. It is my great pleasure to see those scholars in the field and friends, old and new, together today to discuss and exchange our research achievements concerning Taiwan studies.

To promote the study of Taiwan’s literature, history, society, and culture from a comparative perspective and with an interdisciplinary approach, the Center for Taiwan Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has organized various panel discussions since 1998 under the names of “Colloquia” (1998, 1999, 2000), “Workshops” (1998, 2000, 2002), and “Conferences” (2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2010). The themes include “World Literature in Chinese,” “Taiwan Literature and World Literatures in Chinese,” “Taiwan Imagined and Its Reality—An Exploration of Literature, History, and Culture,” “Taiwan Literature and English Translation,” “Taiwan Literature and History,” “Taiwan Studies in Global Perspectives,” and “Taiwan under Japanese Rule: Cultural Translation and Colonial Modernity.” Our last major event was the 19th annual conference of the North America Taiwan Studies Association (NATSA), which took place on June 21-22, 2013, co-sponsored with the Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica.

Furthermore, to continue to promote Taiwan Studies and explore in depth the various aspects of Taiwan in literature, history, society, politics, ecology, religion, arts, music, or folklore in the light of interdisciplinary approaches and from multicultural and comparative perspectives, we have organized this conference with assistance from the Graduate Institute of Taiwan Literature, National Taiwan University, and support from the Economic Division of the Taipei Economic & Cultural Office in Los Angeles, as two co-sponsors.

The theme of this conference is conceived in terms of “Inter-flow and Trans-border: Ocean, Environment, and Cultural Landscape of Taiwan” (交流與跨界：海洋、環境、與臺灣的文化景觀). Taiwan is an island situated to the east of the southeastern coast of mainland China across the Taiwan Strait. Facing the Pacific in the east, Taiwan is mostly mountainous while in the west the island is shaped by gently sloping plains. Since the seventeenth century, Taiwan has been an important trading outpost between East and West and its society has been characterized by records of travel, exile, migration and immigration with multiple foreign cultural influences. Its geography, history, society, and culture have been the intriguing subject of study and provided a rich bonanza for interdisciplinary exploration, including social, cultural, historical, environmental, economic, political, colonial, postcolonial, and postmodern aspects, as well as the impact of democratization and globalization of the new century.
At this time, I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words about the Center for Taiwan Studies (CTS) in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies (EALCS). The Department of EALCS at UCSB is distinguished for its interdisciplinary scholarship across the Division of Humanities and Fine Arts, and indeed the university. The department is dedicated to the study of the civilizations of China, Japan, and Korea in all their richness and diversity. Our campus was one of the first to recognize the importance of studying Taiwan and its culture on its own—rather than as a minor subsidiary of China. In promoting scholarly work and intellectual exchanges on Taiwan literature, culture, and society, our Taiwan Studies program will enable a better understanding of other topical issues in Asian Studies, such as the relations between China and Taiwan, the Taiwan issue in global politics, China studies from Taiwan’s perspectives, and security in the Asian-Pacific area during this century of globalization and China’s ascendance in the global community.

Taiwan Studies at UCSB is sustained by two important establishments, the Lai Ho and Wu Cho-liu Endowed Chair in Taiwan Studies and the Center for Taiwan Studies, which were both concurrently established in 2003 under the auspices of the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies. The endowment was provided by a number of individual donors associated with the Taiwanese American Foundation of San Diego. The goal of this Endowed Chair, held by Professor Kuo-ch'ing Tu, is to help position the campus as an international center for the exploration of Taiwan's literature, history, and culture. Additionally, the goals of the Center are set to promote scholarly research related to Taiwan, enhance international understanding of Taiwan and its culture, and advance the study of Taiwan culture worldwide. The guiding principles of the Center are defined in relation to “cultural exploration,” “academic stance,” and “international perspective,” with which to explore Taiwan and experience its rich and varied cultural phenomena. Since its inception, the Center for Taiwan Studies has coordinated many activities related to Taiwan Studies, including fellowship support, publications, visiting writers program, international conferences, and cultural events.

For all the conference participants, either old friends or new acquaintances, who have come from afar to present papers and serve as panel chairs, I am very thankful for their scholarly effort and contributions. Particularly I would like to mention that there are five invited discussants to discuss the papers in the professional manner and in the Confucian spirit of making friends through intellectual exchange of research and writings (以文會友). The discussants are Professor Jenn-Shann Jack Lin of the University of Alberta, Canada, Professor Hsu Chun-ya of National Taiwan Normal University, Professor Kevin Tsai of Indiana University, Professor Bert Scruggs of the University of California at Irvine, and Professor Pei-te Lien, my colleague in the Political Science Department, UCSB.

For two days we will be together to enjoy the opportunity for profound and stimulating dialogues with other colleagues and scholars in the field, to exchange perspectives, and discuss areas of questions and mutual understanding. While focusing on our common concerns, we hope this conference will be conducive to our gaining a deeper understanding of Taiwan and further broadening our perspectives of Taiwan studies in our professional endeavors, and strengthening international collaboration. At the same time we also hope you will find the time after the conference to discover for yourself some of the charms of Santa Barbara and have a memorable conference in the city of eternal springtime, which is known for its tranquility and natural beauty.
We look forward to the success of this conference and thank you for your participation.

Welcome!

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