On April 30, 2004 the Lai Ho and Wu Cho-liu Endowed Chair in Taiwan Studies was formally established at the University of California, Santa Barbara with a $500,000 gift from a number of individual donors associated with the Taiwanese American Foundation of San Diego. The benefactors said they made the gift to help position the campus as an international center for the exploration of Taiwan’s literature, history, and culture.

The professorship has been named in honor of two major twentieth-century Taiwanese literary figures, the late Lai Ho, considered the pioneer of Taiwan literature, and the late Wu Cho-liu, a writer whose work represents Taiwanese cultural, political, and social concerns. The endowment will support the teaching and research of an eminent scholar chosen to fill the position, currently filled by Professor Kuo-ch’ing Tu, an acclaimed poet, translator, and critic, and a professor in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies.

“This endowed chair will bring increased academic distinction to the campus and further enhance the prestige of our Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies,” said UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang. “We appreciate both the dedication and the generosity of the donors.”

Ronald Egan, chair of the department at the time, said “UCSB will likely become the focal point of scholarly specialization in Taiwan studies—unequaled elsewhere in the country.” Until the 1980s, when the social and political realities of Taiwan underwent fundamental changes, Taiwan and its distinctive culture had not been common subjects of academic inquiry, Egan explained. Over the last twenty years, Taiwan-related studies have grown significantly, attracting international scholarly attention.

“As scholars increasingly approach the study of Chinese literature and culture from a global perspective, Taiwan studies becomes increasingly important,” said David Marshall, dean of humanities and fine arts in the College of Letters and Science. “This generous gift will build upon our strengths in this interdisciplinary area of study.”
CTS Goals: Promote Taiwan Studies Worldwide

In addition to the newly established departments of Taiwan literature and cultural studies at various universities in Taiwan, research institutions such as the Society for Taiwan Studies at Tenri University and the Japan Association for Taiwan Studies in Japan, and the Research Unit on Taiwanese Culture and Literature at Ruhr University in Bochum, Germany, were established in a timely manner as a response to this emerging trend. Working in concert with this international development, the Center for Taiwan Studies was established within the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies at UCSB in 2003, concurrently with the foundation of the Lai Ho and Wu Cho-liu Endowed Chair in Taiwan Studies.

The goals of the Center for Taiwan Studies are 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,” which provide a three-dimensional prism with which to explore Taiwan and experience its rich and varied cultural phenomena. In furtherance of these goals, the Center promotes the translation of Taiwan literature into English and intellectual exchange among scholars of Taiwan studies, and will more specifically try to enhance international scholarly exchange with Taiwan.

Center’s Long-range Objective

Establishment of “UCSB Taiwan Studies Endowment” to Fulfill Vision and Endure

The Center’s long-range objective is to establish a “Taiwan Studies Endowment” to carry out its mission, with the following specific components:

1. Regularly conduct scholarly events, such as international conferences on Taiwan literature and culture, and host programs such as the Taiwan Studies Lecture Series and Taiwan Writers in Residence at UCSB;
2. Make Taiwan writers’ works available to English readers by publishing translations of their works, especially single volumes of representative works of major writers, as well as bilingual versions of selected works;
3. Edit and publish monographs in English on Taiwan studies developed from the dissertations and research papers of young scholars and graduate students from universities in the United States.

There is a long way to go to accomplish these goals. With the Lai Ho and Wu Cho-liu Endowed Chair as a foundation, we look forward to the day when UCSB will become a specialized institute for publishing Taiwan studies and an international center for the presentation of the literature, history, and culture of Taiwan.
CTS Publications Dedicated to English Translation of Taiwan Literature and Taiwan Studies in English

The CTS has launched four series of publications in promoting English translation of Taiwan literature and Taiwan-related studies in English: Taiwan Literature: English Translation Series, Taiwan Writers Translation Series, Taiwan Literature: Chinese-English Bilingual Series, and Taiwan Studies Series. Through these series CTS seeks to demonstrate the validity of Taiwan literature as a world literature, by making representative works accessible in English translation and thereby promoting the appreciation and study of Taiwan literature from international perspectives.

These series will provide a growing resource of materials for teaching and research beyond the borders of Taiwan, not only in Taiwan literature itself, but in the fields of Chinese literature, comparative literature, and world literatures in Chinese.

Taiwan Literature: English Translation Series

台湾文学英译系列

To promote a better understanding and effective knowledge among scholars abroad of the current state and tendencies of literature as it has developed in Taiwan, this journal introduces the voices of Taiwan literature as expressed in recent publications by Taiwanese writers and scholars. Two issues are published each year, each with its own focus, comprised by critiques, fiction, essays, poems, and studies. Starting in 1996, seventeen issues have been published to date.

Taiwan Writers Translation Series

台灣作家英譯系列

The Taiwan Writers Translation Series focuses on the writer, with the objective of demonstrating a vertical depth of development, together with the historical positions of writers and the lineages of literary traditions.

Taiwan Literature: Chinese-English Bilingual Series

台灣文學漢英對照叢書

Republication in bilingual format of selections from the journal is intended to provide literary material for the practical study of Chinese and English as second languages. These bilingual volumes are expected to enhance the readers’ consciousness of language as deployed in the creation of literature, while simultaneously stimulating language learning by offering material of high literary quality.

Taiwan Studies Series

台灣研究叢書

CTS has inaugurated the Taiwan Studies Series, with the proceedings of the 2004 international conference, Taiwan Imagined and Its Reality: An Exploration of Literature, History, and Culture as Volume 1. This new series will focus on monographs in English on Taiwan studies, with its readership targeted at students and scholars in American universities who are interested in Taiwan studies or are specialized in the study of Taiwan literature, history, and culture. It will include dissertations and research papers of young scholars and graduate students from American universities, as well as proceedings of conferences convened by CTS.
UCSB Taiwan Writers in Residence Program Invites Renowned Writers Lee Chiao and Tzeng Ching-wen

Lee Chiao (Li Qiao), who has been at the forefront of the Taiwan literary world for more than four decades, was the Center's first visiting writer. He spent two months at UCSB, from April to June 2004, giving various lectures both on and off campus. "My Literary Journey: A Conversation with Lee Chiao" was conducted at UCSB, a dialogue with Professors K. C. Tu and Michael Berry in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies. Professor Tu also accompanied him to visit Taiwanese communities at Dallas, New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego. Lee Chiao is author of several dozen volumes of fiction, essays, and cultural criticism, including the award-winning epic trilogy Wintry Night (Columbia, 2001).

Tzeng Ching-wen, recipient of the 2005 National Literature and Arts Award in Taiwan, was in residence at UCSB in summer/fall 2005. His most recent works to be translated into English include Three-Legged Horse (Columbia University Press, 1999), for which he won the 1999 Kiriyama Pacific Rim Book Award, and Magnolia, Stories of Taiwanese Women by Tzeng Ching-wen, (published by the Center for Taiwan Studies in 2005). He delivered the keynote address at the CTS Conference on Taiwan Literature and Translation held in September 2005, and gave several lectures in Los Angeles, San Diego, and Canada.

Both Visit Taiwan Centers in L.A., San Diego, and Other States

Chuan Lyu Foundation Distinguished Program Fund in Taiwan Studies Established at UCSB

The Chuan Lyu Foundation in the U.S. has established The Chuan Lyu Foundation Distinguished Program Fund in Taiwan Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, which will support scholarly activities, including Taiwan literature, lectures by scholars invited from Taiwan, public lectures on Taiwan studies in literature, history, and culture by eminent scholars in the field, and support of new library materials. With this library support, priority is given to the acquisition of creative works and critical studies on contemporary Taiwan literature, history, and culture, preferably works published by the major publishers in Taiwan for the East Asian Collection in the UCSB Library.
2005 UCSB International Conference on Taiwan Literature and English Translation

Interchange among Scholars, Writers, and Translators

Translators, students, and scholars of Taiwan literature from Taiwan, Canada, Australia, and the United States participated in a conference entitled Taiwan Literature and English Translation on September 24–25, 2005. The objectives of this conference were to:

1. Strengthen academic interaction between the CTS and international scholars, graduate students, and translators of Taiwan literature;
2. Provide a brainstorming workshop, draw on collective wisdom, and absorb useful ideas from translators to further promote the English translation of Taiwan literature;
3. Discuss particular issues involved with the translation of Taiwan literature and exchange views on translation to share common ground for collaboration.

Papers exploring the participants’ particular interests in the historical development of Taiwan literature and its writers and works were presented in English or Chinese. The renowned Taiwanese author and 2005 CTS Visiting Scholar, Tzeng Ching-wen, was in attendance to deliver the keynote address, “Translation of Taiwan Literature into Foreign Languages—About Three-legged Horse,” and to hold a dialogue with the translators of his works in Magnolia—Stories of Taiwanese Women by Tzeng Ching-wen, Jenn-Shann Lin and Lois Stanford.
Perhaps the most idiosyncratic of filmmakers to emerge from the new Asian cinemas of the mid-1990s, Malaysia-born and Taiwan-based director Tsai Ming-liang has found significant critical acclaim for his spare postmodern allegories of contemporary life. His recurrent subject is the human condition, the solitary nature of individual lives, the rituals that engender survival, and the restorative powers of love.

Co-sponsored by the Center for Taiwan Studies, the Department of Film Studies, and the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies, the screening of two movies by this prominent director at UCSB (October 2003) was further enhanced by a roundtable discussion with Director Tsai Ming-liang, Prof. Michael Berry (East Asian Languages) and Prof. Claire Conceison (Dramatic Art).

A cinematic meditation on the new millennium, What Time Is It There? creates a sublime, humorous, and affectionate examination of transience, connection, and coincidence, set in Taipei and Paris. Using recurrent allusive and dualistic imagery that figuratively link the disconnected lives of Hsiao Kang, his mother, and an attractive young woman named Shiang-chyi, Tsai visually unites their grief and longing into a universal existential portrait of contemporary alienation. Through comedic, yet achingly bittersweet episodes of near encounters, duality, and coincidence, What Time Is It There? transcends the bounds of geographical, cultural, and personal isolation to map the elusive metaphysical plane of human interconnectedness.

The short The Skywalk Is Gone, which can be considered an epilogue to What Time Is It There? continues the journey of Shiang-chyi and Hsiao Kang. In the process, Tsai Ming-liang further develops his own cinematic exploration of disconnect, alienation, and loneliness.
Art of the Zodiac—Celebrating the Year of the Monkey
Exhibited at UCSB MultiCultural Center

Since 1995, the Council for Cultural Affairs in Taiwan has authorized the annual Craft Exhibition of Twelve Animals to be shared with an international audience. In celebration of 2004, the year of the monkey in the Chinese calendar, the exhibit Art of the Zodiac—Celebrating the Year of the Monkey was on display at the MultiCultural Center at UCSB. A range of both contemporary and traditional craftsmanship was displayed, including engravings, Chinese ink paintings, calligraphy, and works in ceramic, glass, stone, metal, wood, and bamboo mediums, produced by contemporary Taiwanese artists.

This exhibition provided a rich opportunity for the viewer to experience another culture—both in terms of its artistic expression and the belief system and mythology reflected therein. It was co-sponsored by the Center for Taiwan Studies and the exhibit was available to the community at no cost.

UCSB Students Forge Friendship in Taiwan
Cultural Experiences and Field Research
Supported by Ministry of Education Scholarships

David Hull, Ryan Adams, Anna Hennessey, and Jonathan Lee are UCSB graduate students recommended by the CTS to visit Taiwan and engage in field and archival dissertation research. Hull is a graduate student in East Asian Studies, while Adams, Hennessey, and Lee pursue advanced degrees in Religious Studies. Adams was recipient of a fellowship to study at Taiwan Normal University Language Center (9/04–3/05) and was awarded a two-week trip to Taiwan in December 2005. Hennessey also received a Taiwan Fellowship, which has enabled her to study at the Taiwan National University Language Center (9/05–6/06).

Hull, who benefited from two weeks of touring Taiwan along with fifty other foreigners, sponsored by a Taiwanese government program aimed at increasing tourism, writes “At the end of the trip, we were asked what Taiwan’s most appealing feature was. Some mentioned the scenery, others said that the culture was enthrancing but, by far, the most popular answer was the friendliness of the people. Without fail, we, even the most demanding of us, were treated with exquisite kindness. It might be expected that those involved with the tour, the guides and escorts, would treat us well, and they did, but what was most moving was the treatment we received from people with seemingly no vested interest in our trip—the schoolgirl who offered to share an umbrella during a downpour, the man who found a camera bag and took a great deal of trouble to find its owner, the young girl who seemed too embarrassed to try her English, but thought nothing of guiding some of us through the Taipei subway. Not only did she point them in the right direction, but she followed them through two missed stops in order to get them back on the right train. More than anything, I believe that friendliness is Taiwan’s greatest natural resource.”

Lee, a 2004–2005 recipient of the Blakemore Freeman Fellowship for Advanced Chinese Language, was further supported by the Taiwan Ministry of Education Scholarship for the 2005–2006 academic year, which he reports to have enabled him to increase his Mandarin language abilities markedly and to begin the study of Minnanese and classical Chinese training. In addition, his extended stay in Taiwan will contribute substantially to his preliminary field and archival research for his dissertation. Lee has recently published “Mazu yu Tai-wan xin yimin de Meiguohua” [Mazu and the Americanization of New Immigrants from Taiwan] in Chinese.
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