ABOUT THE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

1. PROFESSOR MICHEL HOCKX

a. Abstract of presentation

Communication, boundaries and obstacles in the study and teaching of modern Chinese poetry

In China, the theory and practice of modern Chinese poetry are established on the basis of the understanding that “poetry is a tool of communication.” The concept of the ancient Chinese “tong” meant “accurate”, “understandable” and “logical”, and many Chinese poets and critics of the 20th century used “easy to understand” as the criteria to judge poetry. As a result, poems which required “detailed reading” and positive interpretation and explanation, or those which were difficult to understand, were not widely appreciated. These criteria were often based on the belief that the classic Chinese poetry was perfect, and that there should be “rules” and techniques for poets to follow.

This paper reviews the concept of “tong” in the criticism on ancient Chinese poetry and gives a brief account of the expositions about the communication nature of poets, which were proposed by the Chinese writers in the 20th century. The paper briefly analyses the poetry websites that currently exists in China, and highlights the “interactive and communicative” features that have become the most important characteristics in the creation of poetry. It also discusses the obstacles that Chinese students encounter in the interaction with their non-Chinese teachers while attending Chinese literature classes in European universities.
b. **Bio-data**

Prof Michel Hockx studied Chinese language and literature at Leiden University, Netherlands and Liaoning University, People’s Republic of China. He obtained his PhD in 1994 for a thesis entitled *A Snowy Morning: Eight Chinese Poets on the Road to Modernity*. Prof Hockx has since published many books, including *The Literary Field of Twentieth-Century China* (1999), *Questions of Style: Literary Societies and Literary Journals in Modern China, 1911-1937* (2003) and *Reading East Asian Writing: The Limits of Literary Theory* (2003) with Ivo Smits.

Prof Hockx is currently with the Department of Languages and Cultures of China and Inner Asia at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in University of London. He gives lectures on modern Chinese literature and language, Chinese writers and writings from the late imperial and republican periods. He is also the Chair of the Centre of Chinese Studies at SOAS.

Prof Hockx is appointed as international adviser to the Division of Chinese at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences in NTU this year. He gives advice on the objectives and general direction for the division, review the programmes, teaching and research, and assist the division in fostering international links.

2. **PROFESSOR LU JIANMING**

a. **Abstract of presentation**

*Reflections on the Globalisation of Mandarin Chinese*

This paper comprises three parts. Part 1 looks at the emergence of the “Chinese Fever” phenomenon since the 1990s and analyses how China’s position and role in the international arena has spurred an interest in all corners of the world to learn the Chinese language. The paper predicts greater development in the teaching of the Chinese language around the world and highlights some of the challenges and opportunities that the language will face. Part 2 reviews the role of national Chinese agencies in promoting the Chinese language to other parts of the world, and the series of measures that have been put in place to meet the challenges and opportunities. Part 3 highlights some pertinent points which that should be taken in consideration when teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

b. **Bio-data**

Prof Lu Jianming is the Director of the Center for Chinese Linguistics in Beijing University. After graduating from Beijing University in 1960, he stayed to serve his alma mater with his research in modern Chinese.

Prof Lu has since compiled numerous teaching materials and reference books, including some 200 dissertations. He also Lu served as visiting professor in many universities around the world, including Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Malaysia, Norway, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and the US, where he taught, lectured and conducted joint researches. In recognition of his achievements, Prof Lu received the Beijing Teaching Achievement Award in 1996 and the National Teaching Achievement Award in 1997. He was also conferred China’s most outstanding visiting academic award by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in 2000.
Prof Lu is currently the Chairman of the International Association for Teachers of Chinese as a Foreign Language; Deputy Chairman of the Chinese Language Society, and teaches at 13 universities in China. He also provides editorial and consultancy services to various publications.

3. PROFESSOR WANG GUNGWU

a. Abstract of presentation

Nanyang Chinese in Search of Learning: An Unexplored Way

From the time of the Xinhai Revolution to the 1950s, overseas Chinese students who returned to China to pursue higher education had two choices after graduation - to return to their countries and live their lives as patriotic overseas Chinese, or to stay in China and serve the country. Even though few had gone back to China to pursue higher education, those who did had to address many issues, such as how to measure one's patriotism, how to preserve the Chinese culture and whether it would be easier for them to show their patriotism to China if they stayed on. This paper looks at the choices made by some overseas Chinese graduates and discusses the possibility of their experiences and responses recurring.

b. Bio-data

Prof Wang Gungwu is the Director of the East Asian Institute at the National University of Singapore. He is also Distinguished Professorial Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; and Emeritus Professor of the Australian National University, Canberra.

Prof Wang taught previously at the University of Malaya (in Singapore and in Kuala Lumpur) and was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong from 1986 to 1995. He also published many books, including:

- The early history of Chinese trade in the South China Sea (1998)
- China and Southeast Asia: Myths, Threats and Culture (1999)
- The Chinese Overseas: From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy (2000)
- Joining the Modern World: Inside and Outside China (2000)

ABOUT THE ORGANISERS

1. Centre for Chinese Language and Culture

The Centre for Chinese Language and Culture (CCLC) at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) was set up in April 1994 to conduct courses in Chinese language and culture, and conduct research in Chinese language and cultural issues of interest to the local Chinese community. Since the teaching responsibility was transferred to the Division of Chinese at NTU’s School of Humanities and Social Sciences in 2003, CCLC primary roles and responsibilities of CCLC include:

- Conducting research in Chinese language and cultural issues of interest to the local Chinese community
- Serving as the point of contact between NTU and similar centres in other academic institutions
- Conducting relevant activities to promote the understanding of Chinese language and Chinese culture in Singapore

The CCLC produces two major publications, the Nantah Journal of Chinese Language and Culture and the Chinese Language and Culture Series. To date, it has also published five volumes (10 issues) of the Journal and 17 academic monographs.

2. Division of Chinese at School of Humanities and Social Sciences

The Division of Chinese at NTU's School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) was set up in 2003. One of the five divisions in the school, it conducts courses on the Chinese language and culture, with special focus on Singapore and the region.

The division offers Minors in Chinese as well as courses which students may take as general elective subjects. Come July 2004, it will run graduate programmes and offer scholarships to full-time Masters and PhD research students.

The Division of Chinese at HSS will offer BA (Honours) in Chinese from July 2005 onwards.

3. Division of Chinese Language and Culture at National Institute of Education

The Division of Chinese Language and Culture at the National Institute of Education in NTU was set up in 1994 to produce first-rate teachers devoted to the education of the Chinese language in Singapore.

The division strives to lay a firm academic foundation for Chinese Language teachers and equip them with practical pedagogical and IT skills as well as up-to-date knowledge in education research. It also collaborates with Chinese organizations to promote the Chinese language and culture.

The Division of Chinese Language and Culture offers diverse programmes ranging from BA (Ed), Diploma in Education, Diploma in Mother Tongue Education, to Postgraduate Diploma in Education Programmes (Primary and Secondary). It also offers both Masters and PhD (by dissertation) programmes.

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