Panel 3, “Diplomacy in new forms with other addressees”: Caroline Zillesen (German-Chinese Association – Friends of Taiwan) presented “Raising the voice for Taiwan: From national experiences to transnational options”. Cheng Yin Tommy Kwan (Hong Kong and SOAS, London) delivered his paper on “Recognizing Taiwan in Hong Kong: a case study of Taiwan public diplomacy: The Kwanghua Culture and Information Centre”. Albert Wei-min Tang (Fu Jen University, Taipei) unveiled the historiography of the Chinese Youth Goodwill Mission, student talent groups who visited diplomatic allies and friendly areas between 1974 to 1999.

The panel “Government actions and cultural diplomacy impact(s)” was opened by Christian Goebel (University of Vienna) on “Democracy as soft power? How Taiwan’s presidents frame Taiwan’s political system” using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA). Liao, I-Ming (National University of Kaohsiung) in “Knowing Taiwan as a post-Confucian island with reflexive law theory” offered a brief comparison of reflexive law theory and Confucian legal thoughts by looking at three aspects. Jens Damm (ERCCT, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen) discussed “Gender equality in Taiwan: Deep cleavages within Taiwanese society” highlighting the fact that there is a conservative majority in Taiwan that feels that it has been thrown into a global discourse with which they cannot identify.

Panel 5: “Listening to Taiwan’s cultural diplomacy in music” began with L. K. Kam (National Chiao-Tung University, Hsinchu, Taiwan) “Solidarity of the peripheries: Comparing and connecting Taiwan and Austria in the music historiographies”, was followed by Guo-Ting Lin (Westminster University, UK) discussing Taiwanese indigenous musical networks; Ming Wang (Vienna), “A review of my experiences and criticism of the music exchange programme”, and Nancy Guy (UC San Diego) “Music in the service of cultural diplomacy.”

Panel 6: “Teaching Chinese as Taiwan’s cultural diplomacy role” consisted of two presentations: Jade Tsui-ye Lee, in “Taiwan teach for the world: Branding borderless bilingual teachers” introduced a talent training program initiated at National Kaohsiung Normal University in Taiwan to cultivate competent and committed bilingual (Mandarin and English) graduates and professionals. Finally, Chung Samuel Cheng-Ming (University of Vienna) presented “Seeding the Taiwanese spirit: Beginning with teaching Mandarin Chinese internationally” discussed Taiwan’s cultural diplomacy through teaching Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language.

The conference’s concluding remarks stressed the importance of the Vienna Centre for Taiwan Studies for promoting a multinational network of Taiwan Studies in Europe.

Exploring Sinophone Polyphony
Voices of Modern Literature in Taiwan
Trier University, 20–21 September 2019
Astrid Lipinsky and Dirk Kuhlmann

This international workshop was organized by Trier University’s Department of Sinology and the DFG-Centre for Advanced Studies ‘Poetry in Transition’ in collaboration with the Monumenta Serica Institute, Sankt Augustin. Sixteen scholars and authors from Taiwan, Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany and Italy gave presentations on Taiwan’s diverse literary scene in the panels “State of the field,” “Poetry,” “Indigenous sinophone literature of Taiwan,” “Female perspectives in literature,” and “Case studies.”
The first panel provided an overview on Taiwanese languages (Henning Kloeter) and the specific topics of military and nature literatures (Huang Mei-er and Pavlina Kramská). The second panel related Taiwanese poetry to non-literary fields (medicine: Lee Kuei Yun; music: Dong Ya-Li) and showed its many potential applications.

Panel 3 had Astrid Lipinsky introducing the current state of children’s books in Taiwan. She critically evaluated the efforts of Jiang Shuwen to promote the awareness of children’s rights in Taiwan. “Zhang Ailing’s Taiwan image: A contradictory Taiwan perspective” by Hangkun Strian offered insights into Zhang Ailing’s concept of nationality and her perspective on Taiwan. The paper reflected her literary journey through different cultures and life-worlds from 1940s Shanghai, Hong Kong, to her American exile life. Taiwan always remained alien to Zhang Ailing. She visited the island only once in her life, in 1961.

Ludovica Ottaviano (University of Catania) provided a broader perspective on Zhang Dachun’s cultural identity/ies in her paper “Zhang Dachun’s multicultural voice in the global context: The reception of Umberto Eco’s theory of lies”. Zhang Dachun’s medium, Chinese characters, are signs which lie more on account of their rich symbolization. Zhang’s use of Chinese script serves to represent his persona as a (multi)culural unit comprised of a plurality of identities (Taiwanese; second-generation Chinese mainlander; world citizen) and of knowledge (local; global; global).

Panel 4 was devoted to the Sinophone works of Taiwan’s indigenous authors and hosted three renowned authors as presenters. The poet and literary scholar Dong Shuming provided an overview of some trajectories of indigenous Sinophone literature in Taiwan. This specific branch of indigenous literature started in the 1980s and has made a remarkable impact on the Taiwanese literary scene since then. It has become a key medium to reflect upon personal identities and the challenges of being indigenous within the frameworks of culture, collective identities, social status, and gender. The Bunun author Neqou Soqluman presented his journey towards becoming a writer. His literary work aims at making the Chinese-speaking audience in Taiwan aware of Bunun culture on different levels and from different perspectives. Poetry is Salinan Takisivilainan’s literary mode of choice. He reflects upon Bunun identity and he has up to now published three poetry anthologies. His insights were presented by his niece who is a writer herself. The fifth panel gave an overview of the many potential research topics related to female authors of different generations and ages. The speakers also provided an insight into the Institutes of Taiwan Literature at a sizeable number of universities. Furthermore, Mark Lai proved the interest of young male researchers in female authors and issues.

A second set of case studies comprised the sixth and final panel. Lo Shi-yun analyzed the journal New Taiwan that provided a platform for discourses on the identity of the Taiwanese in the transition from being a Japanese colony to the “nationalization” policy of the KMT since 1945. “Voices of ‘New Literary History’ in 1982–1987: Polyphonic narratives of Taiwan” and “The ROC in literary Taiwan and literary information” by Chang Li-hsuan dealt with the crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrations initiated by the editorial team of Formosa Magazine. Two major platforms for this debate where the short-lived quarterly Literary Taiwan and the monthly journal Literary Information whose profiles Chang introduced in more detail.

Wu Ming-Yi’s literary works are renowned well beyond Taiwan and have been translated into more than 10 languages. A key concern of the author is how to find appropriate solutions for the challenges of the Anthropocene, e.g., by further exploring new models of environmental protection and sustainable lifestyles. Chung’s analysis focused on the novel Fuyan ren (The Man with the Compound Eyes), a representative work of Wu’s ecocriticism.

All in all, the two conference days offered ample opportunity for a fruitful exchange between Western scholars and Taiwanese scholars and authors. At the conclusion, the workshop was in particular appreciated as an event that brought Taiwanese literature to the fore of academic discussions, proving a very significant field of research.
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Astrid Lipinsky is the co-founder and managing director of the Vienna Center for Taiwan Studies that will celebrate its tenth anniversary in 2019. Dr. Lipinsky studied Sinology and Law at Bonn University, Germany, and universities in Taiwan. Her research interests are Gender Studies and Taiwan Studies. She teaches at the Department of East Asian Studies, University of Vienna, Austria. Her publications are available on her homepage at www.sinojus-feminae.eu

Dirk Kuhlmann received an M.A. in Contemporary Sinology, History and Classical Chinese Philology (2005) and a Ph.D. in Contemporary Sinology (2011), both at the University of Trier. In January 2006, he joined the editorial office of the Monumenta Serica Institute. In addition to editorial work, he has participated in the organization of conferences, exhibitions, and other events of the institute.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH GRANT FOR THE STUDY OF THE TAINAN REGION, 2020

Purpose of the grant
The grant aims to encourage M.A. and Ph.D. candidates to pursue their humanities or social sciences studies on the Tainan area. The inclusive purpose of the grant is to nourish interest in the Tainan region, to enhance knowledge about its past and present, and to open up to other localities and countries.

Organizers: the International Center for Tainan Area Humanities and Social Sciences Research committee, composed of Taiwan and foreign scholars specializing on Tainan and currently engaged on this field, administers and takes charge of the selection process. The grant is generously funded by the Cultural Affairs Bureau of Tainan City Government.

Applicants’ qualifications
1) They must either be M.A. students or Ph.D. candidates in a university or a college, in Taiwan or abroad; 2) The subject of their M.A. dissertation or Ph.D. thesis must relate to the Tainan area, fully or in comparison with other regions of Taiwan or any corner of Asia, in the field of humanities or social sciences; 3) For reasons of accounting, they must complete their thesis in two years (2022) after being granted.

Number of recipients and amount of grants: Two Ph.D. grants, each at NTD 100,000; Five M.A. grants, each at NTD 50,000.

In order to encourage fieldwork research in Tainan, the recipients are eligible to apply and stay for short periods at the International Center for Tainan Area Humanities and Social Sciences Research. In that case, a fieldwork proposal will have to be submitted to the Committee of the Research Center. Except a room in the Japanese house run by the Center, they can be provided office space with equipment, and can have access to the documentation of the Center focusing on first-hand resources. Contacts with the agents of the local society, local students and academics will be facilitated by the research assistant of the Center and its committee members.

Application deadline: between February 1th and May 31th, 2020.

Contact: Mr Wen Sheng-Chih; Tel: 886 (0)6 7212338 — 886 (0)6 6324453; E-mail: ic.tahr@gmail.com. For more details, please see announcements on the websites of the Cultural Affairs Bureau of Tainan City Government, and the International Center for Tainan Area Humanities and Social Sciences Research.