

111 學年度第一學期 Eurasia 基金會國際講座

「亞洲共同體：東亞學的構築與變容」系列講次(4)

講題：文學、生命

**International Lecture of the Eurasia Foundation, Fall Semester 2022**

**Series Lectures (4): “Asian Community: The Construction and Transformation of East Asiaology”**

**Topic: Literature, Life**

For the 4th Eurasia Foundation International Lecture in the 2022 academic year of the Chinese Culture University, we invite Professor Tsui-Ling Wang of the Department of Chinese Literature at National Cheng Kung University to give a lecture entitled “Literature and Life.” In the wedge part of the speech, Professor Wang proposes three pillars, “The Taste of Life--Good Start and Good End,” “Ordinary Miracle--Life is a Miracle,” and “now life and now death; now death and now life,” to bring out the main theme of the feast of “Literature, life.” Professor Wang discusses life from the perspectives of literature, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, interspersed with video and audio, and discusses life in simple terms. Professor Wang also said that this sharing is not the speaker’s own business, but a resonant exchange with the audience.

**Defining “literature, life”**

First, we define “WenHsueh” (文學, literature) with the following three points.

- (1) Wen: words, literature, culture, civilization
- (2) Hsueh: Hsueh (學, Learning) • Shi (習, Learning)→Reviewing the past • Knowing the new
- (3) Literature: the medium of description and expression
  - Oral traditions, Graphics, keep records by tying knots, hieroglyphs, poetry, literature....
  - Expression of arts and multiculturalism.
  - Pure literature, narrow literature, broad literature
  - The 2016 Nobel Prize in Literature was awarded to American singer-songwriter Bob Dylan for “creating new poetic expressions within the American song tradition.”

When defining “life,” Professor Wang first explained “life” literally as survival, living, and life attitude. Then it focuses on the elaboration of “the form and evolution of life” and “the connotation and ultimate concern of life.”

**The form and evolution of “life”**

First, let's talk about life from the tangible and intangible.

① Tangible: figurative (with concrete and visible physical life)

The visible is easy to see, the invisible is difficult to see. The invisible must have enough imagination. It is important to establish a platform connecting two worlds of the visible and invisible, rather than being a person trying to survive in the cracks.

② Intangible: abstract (such as void, chaos, Wuji, Taiji)

Liu An's *Huainanzi* (淮南子): "From furthest antiquity to the present days is called 'extension-in-time;' the four directions [plus] up and down are called 'extension-in-space.'" Here the "Yu" (宇, extension-in-time) refers to space, and the "chou" (宙, extension-in-space) refers to time.

Professor Wang believes that because of the length of time, our lifespan is limited. There is life, and there is death. Because of the limitations of space, our bodies cannot move freely and penetrate space. Time and space are protections and limitations for us, allowing us to live infinite possibilities in limited time and space. Since life is limited in length, we cannot control its length, but we can make a difference in width, height and density.

Professor Wang takes German Michelin chef Dörte Schipper, Harvard Business School professor Clayton Christensen, Austrian physicist Erwin Schrödinger as examples to illustrate the process of life and its meaning. When talking about this issue, Professor Wang says that people from various professions are discussing life, and there are often things in our lives that are not satisfactory. What should we do when things do not go as we think? The more setbacks the more courageous. We should be grateful for being lucky when we have some luck. We should be grateful for the suffering when we suffer. Whether it is luck or suffering, it can become the nutrition in life, and we look forward to living infinite possibilities in limited time and space.

### **The connotation and ultimate concern of "life"**

When talking about the connotation of life, Professor Wang points out that life needs sustainable management. There are three connotations in the process of sustainable management of life:

- (1) Values: Judgment, mainstream.
- (2) Self: Small Self, Big Self ◇ Butterfly Effect
- (3) Insight: Know yourself and the enemy ◇ Chaos

We need to listen to ourselves, and we need our own insight. If we are the central point, we should start from ourselves to understand the external world and understand others. In the process, various life strategies will appear. Do you want to listen to the

so-called mainstream opinions? Do you dare to go your own way? This is up to us to decide. No one can choose for us in our life. It is us that feel every second in our life.

Self is important. From small self to big self, what we do will have an impact on others, even if it is an impact that we are not aware. Such as the epidemic, we may become close contacts of others unknowingly. Hence, we have to be careful with our single thoughts, because every thought may have a butterfly effect. It is important to learn how to clarify our own position clearly in the chaos and draw multiple concentric circles from our own position. The “insight” is our center of circles.

### **Life--heaven, earth, and people**

The ancients have learned the *thousand Character Classic*, the *Three Character Classic*, and *Youxue Qionglin* (幼學瓊林)” in their childhood and learned the unknown heaven and earth, the sun, moon, and stars from the living environment. These all influence each other. The unity of heaven and man is the expectation of Confucianism for people. The ultimate goal of Taoism is that people live with the void and live forever. Buddhists say that everyone has Buddha-nature and inherently has a pure heart. As long as people are willing to consider themselves to be absolutely small, they can be absolutely large, because only absolute smallness can easily be connected with any life. Absolutely small, can be absolutely large. Though the three schools of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism each have their own priorities, they all value human. Every person is important. Don't ignore yourself and others. Every life is a precious existence. Make the most of the treasure that you already have. In the current words, it is “small self (individual) → → group self → → big self.”

Professor Wang expresses what is the meaning of “survival, living, life, ecology” in the context of the philosophy of life.

(網頁連結：<https://eurasia.pccu.edu.tw/index.php>)

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(Web link:)

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