Forums

Forum 1: Linking the Taiwan Studies and China Studies Fields: How to Argue for the Faculty Recruitment of Taiwan Scholars at Western Universities

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The Problem

Since the establishment of the European Association of Taiwan Studies (EATS) in 2004, the Taiwan studies field has developed remarkably in Europe and beyond. The Centre of Taiwan Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, and the European Research Center on Contemporary Taiwan (ERCCCT) at the University of Tübingen are two of the most prominent examples of the institutionalisation of Taiwan studies in European universities. Two World Congresses of Taiwan Studies (WCTS), held in Taipei (2013) and London (2015) respectively, provide yet further evidence of how lively and vibrant the Taiwan studies field has become over the last 15 years.

However, there are some obvious shortcomings. To this day, teaching positions for Taiwan studies are virtually non-existent at Western universities. With the exception of three endowed chair professorships in Taiwan Studies—at the University of California in San Diego, the University of California in Santa Barbara, and the University of Ottawa—and a Reader position at

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1 Further centres dedicated to the study of Taiwan are located at University of Vienna and University of Ljubljana. The London School of Economics and the University of Nottingham run Taiwan studies programmes. In the United States, there is a Center for Taiwan Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and several other U.S. universities have launched Taiwan studies programmes in recent years (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwan_studies).

2 The new International Journal of Taiwan Studies has now been launched to provide an interdisciplinary platform to publish ongoing research in the field. Also, the Journal of Current Chinese Affairs, run by the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA) in Hamburg, publishes a special Taiwan edition at non-regular intervals.

3 These are the Chuan Lyu Endowed Chair in Taiwan Studies under the Department of Literature in the Division of Arts and Humanities, currently held by Professor Liao Ping-hui; and the Lai Ho & Wu Cho-liu Endowed Chair in Taiwan Studies under the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies, currently held by Tu Kuo-ch'ing. The University of Ottawa has established an Endowed Research Chair in Taiwan Studies, currently held by Professor Scott Simon. In Europe, no such chair exists. It is also striking that the aforementioned chair positions in North America are all endowed, meaning that they have come with extra money stemming from private sources instead of having been established by the allocation of money from ‘regular’ university budgets.