



IAS NEWSLETTER

9 May 2024

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The IAS accomplished a successful feat in April by hosting three events spanning various fields including history, law and technology, and social sciences. Esteemed faculty members and experts were invited to present their latest academic insights, and these events garnered a positive response with a remarkable turnout.

Event Summary

1 The IAS x Interdisciplinary Academic Party – 3

“Interdisciplinary Dialogue between Law and Science”

Date: 10 April, 2024

Speakers:

Bing SHUI, Professor, Faculty of Law;

Xiaobo ZHAI, Associate Professor, Faculty of Law;

Feng WAN, Associate Professor, Faculty of Science and Technology;

Yuanjia HU, Professor, Institute of Chinese Medical Sciences



Professor Yuanjia HU, Professor Feng WAN, Professor Xiaobo ZHAI, Professor Bing SHUI

The third IAS x Interdisciplinary Academic Party, organized by IAS was successfully held on 10 April, 2024, at the Cultural Building. The theme of the party was “Interdisciplinary Dialogue between Law and Science.” The party received broader attention and enthusiastic participation from a diverse audience comprising students and faculty members who actively engaged in the discussion.

During the lecture, Prof. Shui posed a question about how AI technology can improve the comprehensibility of traditional Chinese medical treatment. Prof. Hu explained that traditional Chinese medical

treatment is based on a holistic approach and AI technology allows for the interpretation of it. However, it will take time before it can be practiced in an understandable way. The professors also discussed topics such as the prospects of brain-computer combinations and their impact on life, as well as designing algorithms for self-driving vehicles from a utilitarian perspective. Moreover, the professors discussed various topics related to law, including its relationship with morality, science, and public opinions.



A Group Photo of Guests

During the Q&A session, some students suggested that there are theories suggesting that human beings cannot create strong or super AI. However, Prof. Wan pointed out that based on the trend of technological development, we can get infinitely close to achieving this goal. The group also discussed topics such as law and morality, Chinese medical sciences, and interdisciplinary research. According to Prof. Shui, the law should establish a minimum standard of life. Legal evaluations should be



A student and Professor Feng WAN

based on past behavior, not future behavior. Prof. Hu distinguished between two fields of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Chinese Herbal Medicine. Regarding the issue of interdisciplinarity, professors have noted that in the current era, interdisciplinary conditions facilitate innovation. Researchers must identify gaps in their own knowledge, locate intersections between disciplines, mobilize resources, and solve problems.

At the final wrap-up session, the professors shared their views on the topic. Prof. Hu Yuanjia emphasized the importance of cross-disciplines. Prof. Wan Feng suggested that we should understand, utilize, and contemplate the research on AI, despite the risks involved. He also expressed his belief that through multi-party cooperation, humans can use their wisdom to ensure the proper development of AI and secure a better future. Prof. Zhai Xiaobo suggested that a problem is a phenomenon that causes pain and prevents us from pursuing happiness. All problems have a correct answer. According to Prof. Shui Bing, we should be more concerned about the series of problems brought by today's AI, such as the degradation of human ability, the disappearance of the sense of experience, and the degradation of social relationships. These are more urgent problems.

The IAS x Interdisciplinary Academic Party aims to strengthen research activities among scholars and students, enhance connections between them, and stimulate innovative thinking and academic exploration. The event attracted students from various disciplines and fields, creating a vibrant atmosphere.

2 The IAS Movie Showcase and Discussion

“The Woman from Myanmar”

Date: 18 April, 2024

Speaker: Xiuyue WANG, Director of the film;

Discussant: Xingzhong YU, Director of IAS, Chair Professor of Faculty of Law

Moderator: Qiqi HUANG, Post-doctoral Fellow of IAS

The IAS Movie Showcase and Discussion: “The Woman from Myanmar,” hosted by IAS, was successfully held on 18th April in the Lecture Hall, Cultural Building. This movie is the winner of the award of Best Director at the Indian Film Festival 2022, the award of Best Documentary at the European Independent Film Festival, the Honorable Mention of Best Documentary at the Eastern European Independent Film Festival, and many other awards.

After the 1990s, foreign brides from Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, and other Southeast Asian countries were brought or enticed to mainland China and treated as tools for bearing children. By coincidence, Xiuyue WANG met Larry, a foreign bride who married off to Shandong. Born in northern Myanmar, her aunt sold her to an older man to get money and improve her family’s financial situation, and in these more than 10 years of “marriage”, she gave birth to a pair of children. During this period, Larry escaped from home for once but was tricked into marrying again to another man. By the end of the documentary, Larry had to return to her hometown in Myanmar.

At the discussion, Professor Yu mentioned that this documentary captures the challenges of everyday life for ordinary families, showcasing how people’s aspirations evolve over time. When asked about the documentary’s underlying message, Mr. Wang revealed that he was initially captivated by Larry’s escape from home. However, it was upon Larry’s return that he recognized the importance of portraying the experiences of a woman as a foreign bride. Dr. Huang concurred, noting that creators often gain valuable insights in retrospect.

During the Q&A session, the audience displayed a strong interest in the difficulties of filming behind the scenes. Mr. Wang mentioned that he took a friendly approach, helping Hai Jiang find his wife, taking care of his children, and keeping lonely Larry company. He candidly discussed the challenges of dealing with poor material conditions, unfamiliar transportation, and the considerable psychological and social pressure he faced during filming. Dr. Huang concurred that this task was more demanding than conducting sociological fieldwork interviews.



Professor Xingzhong YU and
Director Xiuyue WANG



A Group Photo of Guests



The Q&A Session



Doctor Qiqi HUANG, Director Xiuyue WANG and Professor Xingzhong YU

At the event's conclusion, a student asked a thoughtful question about how to approach the social issue highlighted by these incidents. Mr. Wang smiled warmly and shared his contentment in raising public awareness about the living conditions of a particular group by featuring an individual in the film, aiming to improve their lives.

The event drew nearly 100 teachers and students. The movie and discussion sparked lively debates and deep reflection among all attendees.

3 2024 Lecture on Frontiers in Humanities

"Revolution by Means of Culture: The Late Qing Revolution and Zhang Taiyan"

Date: 22 April, 2024

Speaker: Shaoyang LIN, Distinguished Professor, Department of History, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Head of Academic Programme and Publication of IAS

Discussant: Shih-Diing LIU, Professor, Department of Communication, Senior Research Fellow of IAS

Moderator: Di WANG, Chair Professor, Department of History, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Associate Director of IAS

The 2024 Lecture on Frontiers in Humanities — the book sharing of "Revolution by Means of Culture: The Late Qing Revolution and Zhang Taiyan", organized by IAS, was successfully held on 22 April, 2024, at the E34 Cultural Building.

During the lecture, Prof. Lin provided a comprehensive analysis of Zhang Taiyan's political thoughts, the comments towards Zhang Taiyan within the academic community, the social background of the New Culture Movement and the Xinhai Revolution. He posited that "though the New Culture Movement and the mainstream interpretations of the Xinhai Revolution seem to be unrelated, in fact they are connected." He



Professor Di WANG, Professor Shaoyang LIN and Professor Shih-Diing LIU



Professor Shaoyang LIN



The Q&A Session



A Group Photo of Guests

then articulated his perspective on the dichotomy between revolution and progress. He posited that the dichotomy between progress and revolution has profoundly influenced Chinese realpolitik.

During the discussion session, Prof. Wang offered some insights on the subject. He posited that the way to understand the revolution is crucial and concurred with Prof. Lin's perspective of examining historical events through a longer and broader temporal and spatial lens. Additionally, he mentioned that it is vital to grasp the intricate interrelationship between progress and revolution. Prof. Liu, on the other hand, interpreted the book from an emotional and spiritual point of view. He offered a political-psychological interpretation of Zhang Taiyan's mental state. He posited that Zhang Taiyan is akin to a "psychopath" who resists cure, yet he transforms the term "psychopath" into a political concept, offering an alternative cultural imagination with a certain socio-political critique. The identity of "psychopath"

opens up additional space for discussion in the current context, promoting social and cultural change.

During the Q&A session, the audience engaged in discourse on a number of topics, including "Japan as an entry point for the late Qing Revolutionary Movement in the study of modern Chinese history," "how to define the duration of time," "how to differentiate between subjective will and objective consequences," "Zhang Taiyan's opinion of the May Fourth Movement," and "the understanding of culture". Prof. Lin stated that the relationship between these factors is complex and cannot be reduced to a simple matter. Instead, it involves a broader geographical field that must be considered. The temporal scope is not constrained by any specific limits but rather depends on the specific focus of the research. What is more crucial is that the research can contribute to the liberation of the blind spots of conventional cognition. The "world" he discussed in this book is a moral and intellectual construct, imbued with universalist values, that differs from the contemporary concept of the "world". He believed that when studying contemporary history, it is essential to pose more questions and engage in more critical thinking.

The lecture attracted students and faculty members from a variety of academic disciplines, fostering a robust exchange of ideas. As a forum for interdisciplinary discourse, the lecture provided an opportunity for participants to expand their knowledge and perspectives, infusing their future academic and professional endeavours with vitality.

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