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The SPECTATOR

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Newsletter

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In search of *courage & peace of mind* from within

By Vivier Li

What will people do if they are facing difficulties? Some people might ignore them and pretend that everything is fine; some might wait for others to come along and help them out. For Professor Yupin Chen, who had tried both ways, the answer came with a new way out of the tight spot, which brought him courage in his new found life.

Two years ago before the summer vacation, Professor Chen was busy dealing with the complicated procedures for his transfer from his previous employer to NTPU. While he was in deep distress, his uncle who was a Buddhism fanatic came back from Vietnam to Taiwan and brought back a bad news which has haunted Professor Chen ever since.

“Your father will suffer from a serious calamity in a short period of time. However, the Bodhisattva appeared in my dream to request for a religious ceremony. Only if you follow my instruction will the calamity be eliminated; otherwise, the outcome will be irreversible,” said Professor Chen’s uncle.

At first, as an atheist, Professor Chen thought that the whole thing sounded ridiculous and unbelievable. He chose to ignore it but this message somehow kept appearing in his mind and started to shake the belief he held for so long.

After another call from his uncle which mentioned about the calamity, Professor Chen finally decided to seek suggestions from his friend who converted to Buddhism.

Telling from Professor Chen’s parents’ “character eight”, it really showed that the calamity his uncle mentioned was true. He then told Professor Chen, “*Dharma Drum Mountai* often holds Dharma assemblies. Perhaps you can go there if you have time.”

Unfortunately, due to work and his four-years-old son, he could not stay at the Dharma assembly for the entire three days. When Professor Chen was on the edge of giving it up, he came up with another way which was through the online Dharma assembly.

Eventually, this incident came to an end, but it’s just the beginning for him to get to know Buddhism. He started to learn and understand the meaning of sutras. “In the sutra, it indicated that people should learn from their daily lives which called religious practice,” said Professor Chen. “Different denominations have different doctrines, but their utmost purpose is the same which I can accept. To stay away from ‘greed, hatred, and delusion’, we

should concentrate on what we have to do at the moment and not be distracted by other things.”

Even though Professor Chen was greatly influenced by Buddhism, he was still eager to know the scientific basis about the religious. One day, when he was reading *The Courage to Be Dislike* written by Ichiro Kishimi and Fumitake Koga, he accidentally found that Alfred Adler’s psychology theory was corresponding to the meaning of sutra.

“People usually expect others to understand their thoughts because their ego is too big. Therefore, they tend to care so much about others’ words or deeds. Bad things then come to their minds and keep bothering them.” This concept is same with Buddhism. “People should not take everything for granted and others don’t have to think of you. If they are willing to help you out, you have to feel grateful. If they aren’t, you have no rights to blame them.” This has greatly deepened the religious belief he held.

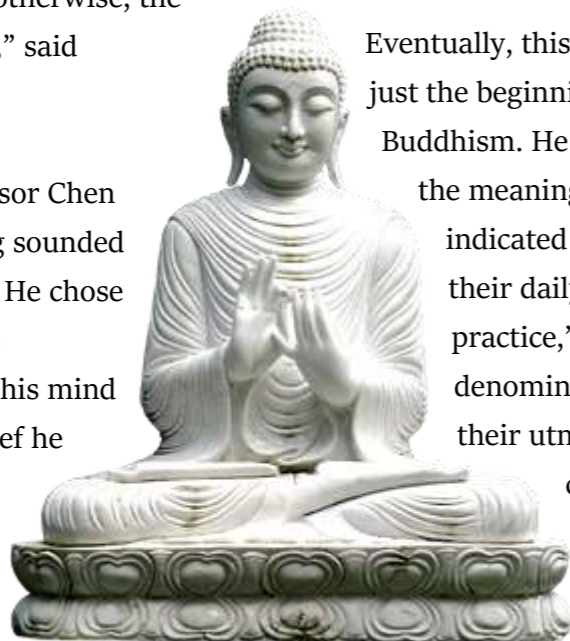
Ever since then, transcribing *Heart Sutra* has become Professor Chen’s daily routine. “In the morning, I like to read and transcribe *Heart Sutra*. When my son comes to me, I will hold him in my arms and resume what I’m writing.” He even study and learn to realize the mystery of it. Hsu

Chieh Sin, the TA of Professor Chen, pointed out that there are many sutras and quotes in his research office. “He seems to be devout to Buddhism. I could sometimes walk into his office and smell the sandal incense.”

Professor Chen obtains the courage to face the difficulties not only from the Buddhism itself but from the realization and understanding of this religion. “From the experience, I learn to argue

less about what I have encountered. In Buddhism, the idea of Karma states that what people are facing now results from what they have done in the past. So, it’s important for us to focus on the present time and spare no

efforts on doing your tasks. This is the best way to stay away from depress and regain the courage to face any difficulties which waiting for you in the near future.



Families are the pieces not to be missed



By Webb Fu

Now that Dr. Chang has been back to Taiwan, connections with her families remain a distant hope. “Early half of 2017, I was busy writing my research papers and I was worried about the outcome of promotion,” said Dr. Chang, who described 2017 as a challenging and tough year for her. Promotion and teaching loads at FLAL has left her little time to spare with her families. One day, her mother, now 70-year-old working at a cloth company paid a visit to her. Entering the room, her mother was shocked at the scene in front of her. Around her desk were four piles of boxes and papers, while the desk itself was occupied with materials for research projects. After that, her mother kept telling her to take a rest while she can, reminding her that quality time with families are just as important.

However, Dr. Chang still found it difficult to squeeze time for her families. “Prof. Chang was really busy most of the time, because I still could see her uploading revised version of our assignments late at night,” said Jessica Chen, a junior student at FLAL, who took Dr. Chang’s writing class.

After the promotion, Chang thought that she could finally relax for a while and accompany her family members, especially her father, who is aged 90, with leisure time. “But everything came so fast, because I have many courses to teach, and have become director of the Language Center in the new semester,” said Chang with a bitter

smile. “In the new semester, I found that the time I spent with students and teaching is much more than that I spent with my families.”

Jane Chien, a junior majoring in sociology who took Dr. Chang’s class added, “In the new semester, Chang’s whereabouts were easy to find because she was either in the class or in the Language Center, and students can find her almost from early morning till when the sun set.”

Even though Dr. Chang’s schedule was tight in the new semester, she still tried all her efforts to accompany her families. When Karen Chang was abroad for conferences, for example, she still cared about her family very much. “Last Tuesday, I got a message from Chang,” said Jane Chien. “She wanted me to contact her mother and tell her mother to read the LINE messages.” That was on a Tuesday night.

Dr. Chang sent messages to her mother, but didn’t get any replies in an hour, which kept her worried. Chang had to ask others to help. Fortunately, her mother did get back to her later, safe and sound.

“The present is the accumulation of a series of what happened in the past,” said Dr. Chang. “So it is not difficult to tell why the most desirable goal for me is to accompany my family.” As a result, she said, it is so important to cherish the moments with your important others’. Even though she was occupied with multiple tasks, she would still try to make that distant hope into reality.



Looking back to 2017, Dr. Karen Chang, an associate Professor at FLAL, admitted that one thing which wrenched her heart—in a year that otherwise was packed with success and new responsibilities—was not being able to spend enough time with her families.

“It was not until recently that I realized cherishing the moments with family is more important than many other things in life,” said Dr. Chang. Before teaching at FLAL, she spent twelve years studying abroad, which kept her from staying with her families. “I still remember that when I was abroad, I was lonely and I missed home.”

Shortly after going to the United States as a post-graduate student in an autumn, Dr. Chang walked into a nearby market, and one thing caught her eyes on the shelves—the cassette tapes for

recorders. Then, an idea flashed into her mind. She decided to buy those tapes which could run for 90 minutes, and ‘write’ diaries with her voice. Each tape, with her own recordings, kept account of her everyday life in a foreign country on a weekly basis.

After each tape was done, she sent it back to her families in Taiwan. In response, her father did the same, recording what happened at home on cassette tracks, and sent it to the U.S. The correspondence in recorded messages, for many years, became a ritual between Dr. Chang and her father to keep both ends connected.

Dr. Chang reminisced once she even recorded a cassette tape for her younger sister, when she was a third grader at junior high, to inspire her to work harder for better marks instead of being a ‘regular’ student. “Looking back to those moments, the tapes became unique memories of our families,” added Chang.

Good deeds from a volunteer with warm hearts

By Eason Lu

Dr. Rae Lan, a Fulbright Scholar, has always been warmhearted. As she went on her research program in the U.S. from 2016 to 2017, she joined local charitable events as a volunteer for four times, helping people in need, and spread her love to them. “What matters is how you volunteer as a way of your life,” Dr. Lan said with a mild yet confident smile.

“I think I’m a good Samaritan,” claimed Dr. Lan, an Associate Professor at FLAL. “If I see anything unfair, I will always stand up against injustice.”

In addition to her personality, the most influential factor that sparks off her volunteering life is the uninvited incident in 2004, when she was diagnosed with lymphoma, or so called lymph cancer.

At first, she confronted the illness with a



pessimistic attitude. The idea of being unlucky kept lingering in her head. However, few months after she learned the bad news, it dawned on her what really mattered was to make every day count and do things to make the world a better place. Thus, she began what turned out to be her volunteering life. She became more optimistic, and her health gradually got better.

“Life is short, so you have to make the best of every minute of it.”

-Dr. Rae Lan

Professor Lan did four volunteering works when she did research works as a Fulbright Scholar at Maryland University, where she got her PhD years ago. She first went to the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival with her Judean friend, Nina Liakos, on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

The festival lasted for two days on the first weekend of June in 2016. There were five stages, and five different communities from around the world presented music, dance, crafts, footways, storytelling, or other living traditions simultaneously, with over four hundred performers in a day.

To Dr. Lan’s surprise, all of the performers were volunteers. In order to show appreciation to those

performers, more than two hundred volunteers provided food for free, and she took part in cutting two dozen kinds of vegetable ingredients for the cooks preparing piles of sandwiches. The preparation work began at dawn because of a great deal of ingredients needed to be dealt with. In the festival, however, Dr. Lan not only volunteered, but also enjoyed different folk cultures at the same time.

Then, she went on to volunteer on Martin Luther King’s Day in a cold January in Maryland. The service was to provide warmth for those underprivileged. Volunteers made hand-made stuff, like weaved clothing, or food for them.



They gathered those supplies, and then distributed them to different charities. Where Dr. Lan was busy offering her helping hands, she took up yet another unexpected volunteering work.

It was called “JA in a Day”—JA was short for junior achievement. This work involved teaching the sixth graders on financial literacy, such as differences between credit cards and ATM cards.

Schools would arrange a day for those volunteers, and they taught the kids through games or activities so that they can learn happily while acquiring knowledge at the same time. Professor Lan went to five different middle schools in Maryland to teach students there. In addition to teaching, she took the chance to introduce Taiwanese cultures to them.

A month before she came back to Taiwan in 2017, she joined a park cleaning volunteering work. The park where Professor Lan always went for a stroll by the lake was called Seneca Creek State Park. One day as she



went there as usual, she happened to meet the opening day of the boat center which was closed for the entire winter. She had never visited the center before, so she went in with curiosity.

The workers there first offered her a boat ride for the nature and history. At that time, she felt a sense of beauty of the lake, which she never experienced before. She utterly enjoyed the boat ride. Then, the workers briefed her with the park-cleaning volunteering by picking up trashes by the lake when kayaking. She signed up for the task without hesitation. The next few weeks, she came there after works, and go park-cleaning kayaking with or without companies.

She thought it was worth every minute of it



Leaving huge shoes to fill

By Joanne Han

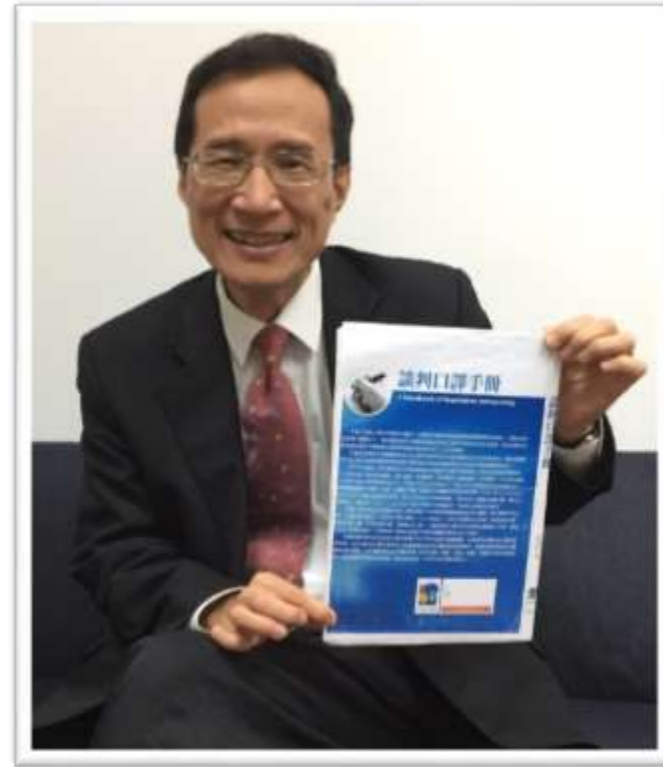
because she could both do something good and row a boat for free. By doing so, she not only purified the environment but also admired the beauty of the nature.

She is always willing to help others. She believes that, by helping others, she can experience humanities, which are priceless. What's more, it's very likely to embark on a new friendship. When she was on the trip to Machu Picchu in Peru, which was on the top of her bucket list, she met Silvia, a German young nurse, who traveled abroad once every two months.

Since Silvia hasn't been to Taiwan, Professor Lan gave Silvia her business card for future contact. "You must come to Taiwan," said Lan. "If you come, let me be your tour guide." Three weeks after Professor Lan came back to Taiwan, she received an e-mail from Silvia about her plan to visit Taiwan. Then, Rae immediately asked her students in her class of Tourism English if anyone would want to be a culture ambassador. With success, two in the class were willing to be the guides and show Silvia Taiwanese culture.

In the eyes of Professor Lan, it was meaningful, especially when she can help students put her teaching into practice. "Teaching is also helping," she grinned. "I'm so happy that I help those students with useful skills. Students can learn how to express in English as cultural ambassadors."

Now, Professor Lan still takes up volunteering works in her free time. She is carrying out the way she wants to live her life, because, for her, volunteering is a way of life.



"The best way to help students is being a good listener before offering any advices," said Dr. Chen.

"We can't really realize how other people feel, unless we are in their positions," said Dr. Peter Chen, the Chair of FLAL who founded the department almost two decades ago. Long been regarded as a true scholar in the fields of interpretation, translation, theaters, and cross-nation negotiations, is finally on the countdown to his retirement.

With a trademark smile on the face of one of the most popular professors at FLAL among students, Dr. Chen, articulating as he has ever been, attributed his success in teaching to being a tentative listener.

He may be retiring from FLAL soon, but he will still stick to what he has been best at, when asked about his plans after retirement. "I am willing to dedicate myself to teaching and doing research, and I will continue to do so."

Dr. Chen will be an adjunct professor at FLAL after his retirement from a post he has devoted so much in the past years—which has been taken as good news for many. However, he also has other fish to fry, because he has received invitations to teach in universities in China and the United States. "Some universities in China have already asked me to send them syllabus," said Dr. Chen.

Two invitations from the prestigious Cornell University to teach have also been on his desk.

"I prefer Cornell, because I used to study there," said Dr. Chen. For him, China has plenty of

attractions too, but of different kinds. "I would like to visit China in the near future, but more because I love the old and traditional Chinese cultures there. If I teach there, I won't stay for a long time. Maybe a year will suffice."

Dr. Chen's plate will be just as full when he retires. He will not just teach at FLAL as an adjunct professor, but will also serve NTPU as an ambassador, seeking opportunities to cooperate with universities in other countries, or signing them up as our sister schools, something he has been doing for many years and will continue to do in the future. "This will help our students obtain more educational sources from abroad," said Dr. Chen.

Also, Dr. Chen has been invited by Hwa Tai Publishing, a prominent local publisher, to author text books for college students on negotiation, interpretation, and cross-cultural communications. "I think I will give them a nod for those invitations."

As if his plans after retirement wouldn't keep him busy enough, Dr. Chen has also tempted to write scripts for movies or theatrical drama in the future. "Those are my interests. I love both comedy movies and tragedy dramas. I hope I can write up my own scripts someday," said Dr. Chen.

A great *assistant*, a *partner*, a *friend* at heart

By Bryan Chiu



“She is a great partner, after so many years, or more like a good friend now,” Dr. Chen continued. He recounted that in the past almost two decades, whenever a project was in prospect or if new courses were to be opened, Hsiu-Fen would not only offer formidable administrative assistance, but would offer advices on school regulations. “If we should have a course about school regulations, she would be the one to teach that course.”

After teaching at FLAL for two decades, Dr. Chen will retire early next year. “I truly cherish the partnership we’ve built up for so many years,” said Dr. Chen. “I can’t thank her enough for what she has done for our department and for me personally.”

Dr. Way-Fan Tso, who retired in 2017 as the chair of FLAL for multiple years, echoed with even more sentiments. “Hsiu-Fen is the kind of assistant anyone would have dreamed to have,” said Dr. Tso. “You can’t ask for anything better than what she offered. She has been a great colleague since I came to FLAL years ago, and better, she has been such a great friend.”

During the years when Dr. Tso was the chair of FLAL, she initiated many new projects to promote our department. “I had so many ideas, and thanks to Hsiu-Fen, who always gave me the supports I needed, I could have achieved those new goals,” said Dr. Tso.

For example, when the English Camp was orchestrated for the first time, Hsiu-Fen Lin was the one who held the pieces together, bridging communications between professors, students, and corporate sponsors. “English Camps would not have become so successful without Hsiu-Fen,” said Dr. Tso.

Capable as she has been highly acclaimed, Ms. Hsiu-Fen Lin’s low-key personality has helped her win many people’s hearts. “She is so humble, so sincere, yet so brilliant,” commented Dr. Tso. “What she says to you is exactly what she thinks in her mind. She keeps a perfect combination of ability and humanity.”

When it comes to FLAL’s signature routine events, such as cheerleading competition, FLAL Night, English Camp, mini play, and annual paly, Hsiu-Fen Lin has always been backing the

students. Carol Tsai, a senior at FLAL who directed the 2017 annual play *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, mentioned that Hsiu-Fen was always there for the students. “She helped find places for rehearsals or practice, negotiated with suppliers of materials we needed, and helped us assess if the prices were right,” said Carol Tsai.



“We didn’t have that many experience negotiating with those businessmen, so Hsiu-Fen’s help was even more important for us,” said Tsai. “For FLAL students, she has been a reliable helper, and a wise coach.”

Hank Lee, who was the leader of our Students Union in 2017, also appreciated Hsiu-Fen Lin for putting up so many activities with venues and equipment in need. “I have learned so much from her, who is always so gentle, and is treating us like her friends.”

After serving as an administrative assistant at FLAL for nearly two decades, Hsiu-Fen Lin has started to picture what her life would be like after she retires in the future.

“When I retire, I will do everything I want to do,” said Hsiu-Fen Lin with a hearty smile. Among those on her things-to-do list, spending more time with families—especially her daughter—would be her priority. “However, I would probably find a part-time job at a nearby Seven Eleven, in case life becomes boring after retirement.”

What does an administrative assistant do? How should we define the job? What is a good assistant like? Luckily we won’t have to travel far before we know the answer, because FLAL has one who is not only an indispensable assistant to our faculty, but always an unwavering support to students’ activities.

Ms. Hsiu-Fen Lin has been with FLAL for as long as one can remember. One of the professors acclaimed Lin as the mainstay of our department.

Dr. Peter Chen, now FLAL’s chairman who helped found the department in the first place, turned even more talkative when commenting on how much Hsiu-Fen has contributed to our department. “She has been a great helping hand since before the department was founded eighteen years ago,” said Dr. Chen.

Seeking a desirable life in her own right

By Justin Tsai

After working for FLAL for almost two decades, Professor Li-Yin Peng has started to map out her retirement plans. Compared to other professors who are going to retire soon, Peng seem much younger, but she nevertheless has strong intent in seeking her desirable life.

There are two of Peng's beloved family members she really wants to spend more time with—her parents. They are both aged and have poor physical conditions, but, according to Peng, they are still taking care of their grandsons while her brothers are working during the day. Also, Peng's mother has a serious scoliosis problem and thus cannot stand or does house chores for a long period of time.

Peng once saw her mother crouched down every five seconds while cooking for the kids but still insisted to make a healthy meal for them. Peng's heart was wrenched seeing this. There are things that Peng now considers to be her responsibility. In addition to Peng's needs to earn her living, she also believes deeply that as a teacher, there are some social responsibilities she must fulfill.

Peng is a person who values relationship with friends and family, not to mention her parents who raised her up with love and care. Peng said that her parents set themselves as a good example of dealing with different things and people which has a great impact on her since she was little.

Now her parents are aged, there might not be enough for her to take care of them, and she does not want to leave this kind of regret in her life, believing that the time she stays with her parents is less than many people.

Peng left home to study when she was about twenty years old, and after returning to Taiwan from England, she started to teach. Peng said, "Time waits for no one. I want to accompany my parents and give them time to do things they like. After all, they have sacrificed all their time for the family." Peng felt great joy upon seeing the smiles on her parents' faces when they were chatting with each other about the different plants within the natural environment. Also, she felt peace when visiting temples with her parents. In the future, she hopes that her parents can have more of those happy moments.

Peng also believes that it is time to pursue her own ideal life, and spend more time on her hobbies. She always likes some knickknacks, so tying Chinese knots is one of the things she will frequently do when she retires. Calligraphy is also one thing she wants to master.

Another thing that has won her heart is cooking. "Cooking is almost like the process of creating," said Peng. For her, it is also a process which sets her free from pressures. Cooking can also be a process to create philosophical thoughts. "If you can choose between steamed bread and a steamed bun with pork, which will you choose?" Rather than giving a straight answer, she proffered a different perspective. "A steamed bun with no stuff within but plain bread makes people imagine all kinds of flavors instead of a specific kind of taste," said Peng.



Peng has her own religion belief to follow and pursue. Peng believes in Buddhism, so she studies Buddhism scriptures in her leisure time. During the process, she feels relaxed mentally and has a whole new contemplative understanding of her faith. A motto that she has followed for a long time is, "You've got to take the good with the bad, and one can be austere if he or she has no selfish desires."

The motto dawned on her during the process of studying scriptures, and this example shows how important Peng's belief meant to her, and why she wants to retire and keeps on pursuing for belief in order to feel more inner peace.

Another factor motivating Peng to think about retirement is her health condition. There are several health issues that bother her. Peng thought that she needs a longer period of time to rest her body and to release the stress.

Professor Tso, a good friend of Peng and also her former colleague at National Taipei University, stated that it will be a big loss to both our department and the students if Peng retires. Tso said, "As a colleague, I consider Peng a hard-working teacher who always does her best to teach students as much as she can, and is improving after every different kind of teaching experience."

Also, Tso said that while she was the chair of our apartment, there was once an evaluation about our department's graduates. At that time, Peng was responsible for contacting graduates of our department, which was quite hard for lack of ways to contact. However, Peng stayed at school almost the whole summer vacation to thoroughly collect the data. In the end, our department's evaluation turned out really great thanks to Peng's accurate collecting of the data.

Through this incident, Professor Tso assures that Peng is absolutely a good colleague to work with. Although she said that she will support Peng's seeking for a desirable life, she thinks it will be quite a pity for such a teacher to retire so early.

New plans for a veteran with *versatilities*

By Elwen Feng

One day we will all retire, and the day of retirement is getting nearer for Professor C.K. Liu. He has just completed his stint as the Dean of Humanities College at NTPU, and will retire early next year. His post-retirement plans may surprise many, and surely will impress everyone, with his broad varieties of interests and skills.

Dr. Liu has been a person with a lot of ideas. He has three directions in his future plans, and all of them were formed with small ideas.

First, he has decided to continue his teaching career, even after his retirement. He will keep teaching courses at NTPU, for four hours a week. Additionally, he will accept invitations to frame standardized questions for language proficiencies.

“Why don’t you just enjoy life after retirement by leaving all work behind?” Dr. Liu once asked himself. But it didn’t take long to come up with an answer. He said that even after he retires, there is still a need to keep up with the change of the world. “After all, we always have to keep learning by working, since life must be accompanied with new plans and goals,” emphasized Dr. Liu. Besides, he said, “I am so scared of brain degeneration, so working can keep my brain away from the horrible conditions. I still have the wonderful life to live after retirement.”

In his office, there are a few pieces of paintings hanged on the wall. They are the evening scenes of a small pond with the main motif of a same lotus. Looking carefully, they are like the pictures taken by camera, but a photo can never be so artistic. They are just like pictures produced by software like Illustrator or Photoshop. Actually, they are all created by Professor Liu, who has been an amateur photographer with cutting edge technologies. “You know what, those pictures are painted by me with an iPad, I spent five hours for those,” he said.

For the sake of art, Dr. Liu will spare more time working on his interests in arts, besides teaching. No matter water coloring or digital art, Professor Liu would like to contribute his time for

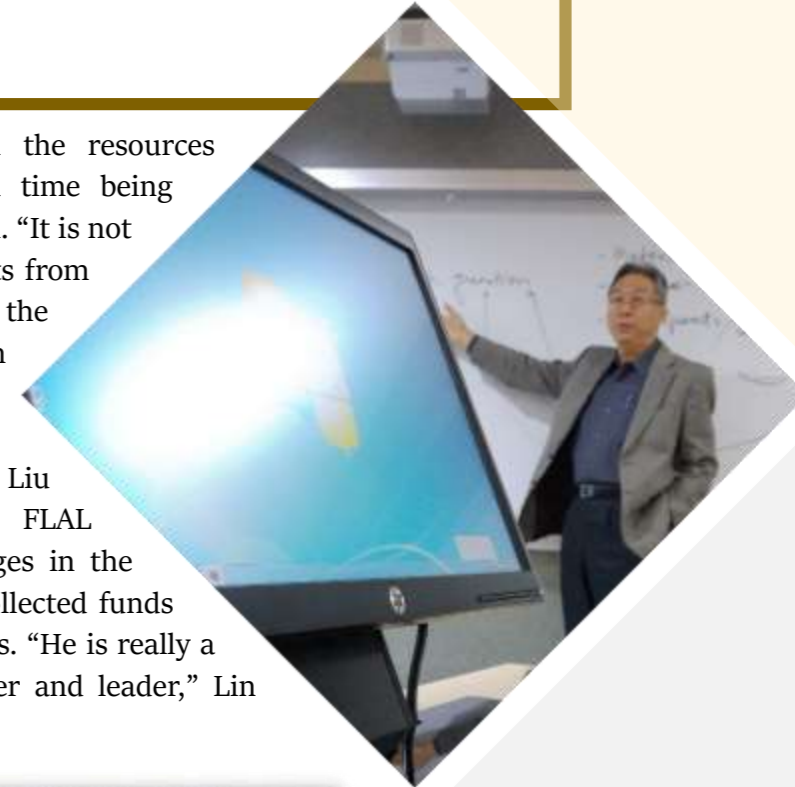
drawing and writing Chinese calligraphy. It is worth mentioning that he preferred watercolor to oil painting because it doesn’t smell stink when drawing and won’t cost that much money. He also revealed that he has been drawn to painting since he was in tender ages. However, since being a painter or an artist won’t necessarily earn enough to make a living, he opted for other professions. “It is not a stable job and everyone has their own tastes, people may not appreciate the excellent paintings of my own. I may go bankrupt if nobody appreciates my paintings.”

The third direction of Dr. Liu’s plans after retirement isn’t that difficult to guess. It is traveling, he said, surely it’s traveling. He would like to travel around the world. To perceive the cultures never seen before, and to eat the local food he never found before. The conveniences brought by modern technologies have made his dream easier to come true. Dr. Liu pointed at his iPad and said, “With a 1.5 pound iPad, I can paint anytime and anywhere. Enjoying the traveling while drawing the sceneries in your eyes, and then expect the new exciting experience would be a perfect routine for him. He asked, “Don’t you think that is wonderful life after retirement?” Switzerland, Xi’an and Hangzhou would be great options when he sets off to travel around the world.

“I like the way professor Liu instructed us in English. I never felt bored in his class, even the boring and obscure courses such as Semantics of the English Verb Phrase,” said Irene Yu, a student at FLAL. He is good at drawing attention and pleasing students with jokes and his special funny tones. There are not, to be honest, many professors like him who will inspire and encourage students to explore new areas. “The first time I heard that he is going to retire, I was so down. It is hard to find such a good professor,” said Yu.

The veteran research assistant Hsiu-Fen Lin at FLAL noted that Dr. Liu has played a crucial role at FLAL. He has been a professor at NTPU for decades, and has founded the Language Center and assigning the English Language Entrance Test. Before transformation, the faculty members at FLAL were responsible for having every freshman for the test. “It was a heavy burden for FLAL

which resulted in the resources such as fund and time being separated,” said Lin. “It is not fair for the students from FLAL, because the earlier system lowered our competitiveness,” said Lin. Also, Dr. Liu helped transform FLAL through many stages in the past decade and collected funds for the annual plays. “He is really a dependent coworker and leader,” Lin concluded.



Encountering Kazuo Ishiguro

By Lily Tsai



In October, the Swedish Academy announced that the Nobel Prize in Literature 2017 is awarded to Kazuo Ishiguro, an English author whose parents are both Japanese, for “who, in novels of great emotional force, has uncovered the abyss beneath our illusory sense of connection with the world”. FLAL is honored to have a scholar who specializes in Kazuo Ishiguro’s works. Dr. Ching-chih Wang, an Associate Professor, has dedicated herself to studying the Nobel laureate for more than a decade.

It was two decades ago that Professor Wang read Kazuo Ishiguro’s works for the first time. “To be honest, I felt nothing from the first two books I read until one of his works, *Remains of the Day*, was adapted to a movie. And he mainly uses the elder man to serve as the protagonist,” Professor Wang confessed. However, when it was about time to start writing her PhD dissertation in 2005, her supervisor recommended *Never Let Me Go*, the novel which Kazuo Ishiguro published then. Professor Wang finished the novel within a few days and with no hesitation she landed on Kazuo Ishiguro and his works. “I have been interested in his exotic descriptions of Japan since few people use English directly to describe Japan,” said Professor Wang.

Furthermore, the subjects that Kazuo Ishiguro wants to imply are “close to real life,” said Bonnie Weng, a junior at FLAL who had read Kazuo Ishiguro’s “A Family Supper.” “The subjects he chooses are those almost everyone will encounter in life, and we can also perceive the cultural differences in his works,” Weng added.

“The vague plots in Kazuo Ishiguro’s works engage readers’ interests and leave them in imaginations, and that enables the readers to think about the unknown storylines,” said Sharon Hsueh, another junior who also read “A Family Supper.” “I think one of Kazuo Ishiguro’s features is that he is good at using a simple story to imply an open ending,” Hsueh said.

Before Professor Wang chose Kazuo Ishiguro as her subject, she had started to learn Japanese since she was in junior college. “The motivation which pushed me to learn Japanese then was that I wanted to know what exactly those Japanese fashion magazines were talking about.” When Professor Wang became a PhD student at National Taiwan Normal University, she advanced her Japanese by language exchange with a Japanese girl who came to NTNU to study Chinese. “I asked a Japanese girl I met on campus whether she would like to do a language exchange with me. She was stunned by my abrupt request at first but agreed right away, and we started our language exchange on Saturday mornings for two hours from 2003 to 2005.”

The purpose of language exchange was that Professor Wang had begun to collect information about Kazuo Ishiguro. Though the reviews she read about Kazuo Ishiguro’s works were mostly written in English, there were still some written in Japanese. Therefore, she needed someone to assist her. “Although my Japanese is adequate, I still need a native speaker to help make sure that my translation was accurate. After that, Professor Wang had language exchange with another Japanese girl, a friend of the first one, who already returned to Japan with her husband. “Language exchange did help me a lot,” said Professor Wang.



“Among Ishiguro’s works, I like *Never Let Me Go* and *Remains of the Day* the most, because these two novels reminded me of my father.” Professor Wang’s father followed Chiang, Kai-Shek to Taiwan in 1949. “The dictator gave his followers a wonderful dream and a promise he could never keep,” said Professor Wang.

Melissa Wu, a junior at FLAL who had read some of Kazuo Ishiguro’s works, including *Never Let Me Go*, said that she had the similar feeling with Professor Wang.

“Overall, what I perceive from this story of human clones is humanity,” Wu said. “People use clones to fulfill their longing for longevity. Selfishness is central to this story.” Wu further explained, “When people remain in a particular circumstance or have been inculcated with certain concept for a period, just like those clones in the book, they have been taught that their mission in life is to donate their organs. In that situation, people won’t be afraid and would not question, for people around them are all doing the same thing. That’s the most frightening part.”

In *Never Let Me Go* and *Remains of the Day*, Kathy and Stevens, the protagonists respectively, their values “echoed with that of my father to some degree,” Professor Wang said. “Kathy and Stevens never doubted why they should do so.” Professor Wang also added, “Kathy is a clone. She doesn’t question the significance of life or organ donations, neither does Stevens. As a butler, Stevens stuck to his professionalism, even when his father was dying.”

What Kazuo Ishiguro’s works impressed Professor Wang the most is the meaning behind “devotion, professionalism, and values of usefulness” in his novels. “Those things are quite touching,” Professor Wang said, “and they also expand on why I committed myself to the study of Kazuo Ishiguro’s works a decade ago. I connected his works to some extent to my coming of age and learned my lessons through his powerful pen.”

Coaching the annual play with *a mother's heart*

By Amber Wang



What cultivates a good theatrical performance on the stage? One may receive various answers, such as teamwork, constant practice, or simply confidence; however, Professor Sue-Han Ueng, who has been an advisor for FLAL's annual play for fifteen years, may probably answer that question—so typically—in deeds rather than in words.



For juniors at FLAL, annual play has always been a signature event. In 2017, Professor Ueng was again invited as one of key advisors. With a PhD from New York University in Performance, Professor Ueng herself is also an experienced director and stage manager. This is the third time for her to coach the play both as an advisor and the class mentor, which only made the responsibility harder to bear. "Everyone was so devoted, and the result turned out great," she said.

Described as "the most senior consultant" by Eric Tsai, a junior at FLAL



who will be the director of next year's annual play, Professor Ueng is always willing to provide her professional insights. In the play performed in May, "The Man Who

Came to Dinner", there was a protagonist named Beverly Carton and he was supposed to sing a song in a particular plot. That plot, which would take merely four minutes, fretted everyone.

Deciding which song to sing is a tough task. The difficulty lied on its setting, which was in the 1990s. Love songs and rock music were especially popular in that time period, but they were not appropriate

for this situation—a song which a British gentleman wanted to sing for his old friend.

"We wanted to find a song that can generate audience resonance," said Andy Zheng, a senior now who played Beverly Carton then in the annual play. "The song was eventually determined by Professor Ueng; of course, although other professors also provided their suggestions, since we had absolutely no idea about the 1900s," he added. The chosen song was Elton John's *Your Song*.



However, this whole plot was not over yet after choosing the song. "I can't sing like a professional, and it took me a long time to find the right pitch," said Andy Zheng. "She helped me figure out the pitch and patiently led me to sing with confidence." With his great efforts and Professor Ueng's company, Andy Zheng finally conquered this daunting task. The singing part of the plot almost brought down the house.

Additionally, Professor Ueng also instructed the acting crews to interpret emotions correctly while acting on the stage. Jyun-Ting Lee, who played Mr. Stanley said that he had a difficult time to get into the character because he himself has a mild temper, but Mr. Stanley often gets mad in the play. "We discussed a lot and she gave me a lot of useful tips," said Lee. "But I know my acting was still mediocre at best, which I only have myself to blame."

Besides technical instructions, Professor Ueng also showed great cares to her students. "She is more like a mother figure," confessed Jyun-Ting Lee. Professor Ueng spent a lot of time accompanying students' rehearsals and she was even so thoughtful that she prepared late-night snacks for rehearsals. "During the later preparations, everyone was

under great pressures," said Jia-Lin Wang, a senior who played Ms. Preen in the play. She was then in Professor Ueng's English composition class. Procrastinating her homework by missing one deadline after another, Jia-Lin Wang finally came up with an article which got negative remarks. "Professor Ueng was worried and even took me out for a meal," she said.

Indeed, Professor Ueng always worried about her students. "I think she was a little bit angry one time when we all submitted our homework late", said Andy Zheng; however, Professor Ueng had different points of view. "I was worried about them," she said, knowing that students spent all their time in the annual play and didn't pay enough attentions to other things like school performance. She indicated that rather than devoting all the time to a project, how to make efficient use of time is more important. "I think this is a real conundrum for our annual plays," she pointed out.

Certain scenes such as a vase served as the stage property was broken by a careless actor or some harmless mischieves among actors and actresses would cause professor Ueng to laugh and her eyes would curve like a crescent when she memorized these funny memories during rehearsals, which testified that she, after all, greatly enjoyed those moments.





An advocate of *Korean classes*, but not the spicy foods

By Jane Chien

What's new in 2018?

Professor Ming-Shing Tsai paused for a moment when asked.

Frowning and pondering first, he then said with a

smile, "There would be a Korean class in the next semester. It is accepted by the Language Center, so I am waiting for the good news."

Professor Ming-Shing Tsai is an Associate Professor at FLAL, teaching Japanese and Russian. He got his master's degree in the University of Tokyo and is a PhD in linguistics which he landed in Peoples' Friendship University of Russia.

According to Professor Tsai, National Taipei University is the only one, among other national universities, that does not have Korean classes.

"About 10 years ago, when Korean fad just started, many of my students told me that they wanted to learn Korean and that they were wondering if I could make it happen," Professor Tsai recalled. "I thought it would not be a problem, and it should be a wonderful thing if we had Korean classes because it provides more options for students."

Talking about why he wanted to promote Korean classes at NTPU, Professor Tsai said, "Actually, I have never promoted Korean classes," he clarified the information. "What I have done is to plan the courses, which is a totally different thing." According



to the school policy, if a professor promotes a course, he or she has to have the background knowledge in that field, but if a professor only plans the course, it would be a different story.

Now, the Language Center already accepted the plan to initiate Korean classes that Professor Tsai proposed. According to Professor Karen Chang, director of the center, Korean classes will be opened in the following semester.

As South Korean fad has become popular, the demand for learning Korean has risen. Heidi Kuo, a graduate from Law Department, has been learning Korean by herself. When she heard that there would be Korean classes after she graduated, she responded, "Why are they opened after I am no longer at school?"

Being a student at Law Department, double-majoring in FLAL, Heidi could not make the time to go to cram school outside the campus to learn Korean. "It is really challenging to learn Korean on your own," Heidi said that the pronunciation was the biggest problem she has encountered, and, without a teacher, it was impossible to pronounce the words correctly.

Chiao-Ya Chang, a senior student from Sociology Department, has been obsessed with Korean fad for years. She always wanted to learn Korean, but the tuitions charged by cram schools always made her

dismiss the idea. When she heard that Korean classes would be opened in the next semester, she was thrilled. "I thought that before I graduate, NTPU would never open Korean classes, but now I cannot wait for it," said Chiao-Ya.

Even though Professor Tsai said that professors with no relevant background knowledge could still plan courses, he does have some background knowledge.



After getting the master degree, he spent a year in a private university in Japan teaching foreign students Japanese, including some Korean students, and that was when he started to learn Korean.

"I am very passionate about learning languages, so I began to learn Korean. After a while, I thought if I did not go to Korea, I might not be able to learn Korean well because the grammar and pronunciation are too different from Chinese or Japanese. So I quit my job and went to Korea."

He took out his certificate of Korean written in Korean and English. "I was there for a year and completed the entire course."

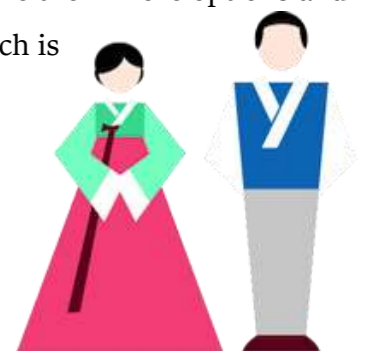
Recalling his memories in Korea, Professor Tsai giggled and said that one thing in Korea he could never overcome was the spice of Korean cuisine.



"Everything you put in your mouth is spicy," he said with laughter. "I would always tell my landlord and restaurants that I wanted no spice in my food. My landlord would put a bowl of water on the tray with the food and told me to wash the food before eating."

But it didn't work for him. As for restaurants, all the food he ordered was still hot, so he went to the kitchens and asked why the food was still this spicy. The owners of restaurants would then tell him that the chili sauce has been cut from normally five spoons to just one. Therefore, every meal he had in Korea was both physical and mental 'sensations' for him.

In the end, Professor Tsai stated that learning Korean or other languages, the most important thing is to have interests and passion in learning. After all, he said, learning more languages is good for human brains according to some research of Linguistic, such as delaying the time of onset Alzheimer. "Why not let students choose languages they are interested in? Give them more options and teach them the thing which is good for their lives, mentally and physically."



Learning the hard way is the only way for a *translator*

By Richard Huang

Dr. Rachel Yin-yin Wu, recently recruited as an Assistant Professor, has acquired broad experience in translating and interpreting before landing at FLAL. Having devoted so much of her time conducting researches, she is at the same time a professional translator and interpreter herself.

“I never feel tired when I am absorbed in what I do, I am always interested in making more progress,” claimed Dr. Wu.

She kicked off to work as a freelancer upon entering the Translation and Interpretation Master’s Program at National Taiwan Normal University. In the first year, despite her strong comprehension skills in English, she felt she was weaker than her peers on the front of Chinese vocabulary. However, she managed to dig deeper into the world of translation and carved out a niche by practicing paraphrasing and translating articles every day.

In 2007, she took up a case to translate one of Stephen King’s novels. Seeing words understandable individually but unable to translate them into the target language in a legit semantic sense are norms for translators. For them, especially those working on books, encountering problems and obstacles is quite common.

“When seeing a word that one cannot interpret literally, the only way is to ask for help,” Professor Wu shared.

Working on translating the novel by Stephen King—Needful Things—she encountered a passage of:

...we notice discrepancies in quarterly Town Tax Return 11 for the tax-year 1989...

She was collaborating with a comrade from graduate school, Hui-Yun Hu, and they both did not have exact idea of what the “11” in this passage stood for.

“At that time, I was hopeless, because we did not know if it was Chapter 11, Number 11, or Form 11.”

They searched it on the internet. Three native speakers from the United States, whom she met at a seminar she attended, were also attempted to help crack the riddle. One said he didn’t know, the other pondered fruitlessly, and another was also unclear of its meaning. All ended in vain. Though, one suggested that she send emails to U.S. officials. This opened up the page for an intriguing story.



Unsurprisingly, the office simply replied that the term was not familiar to their agency. All of her effort was back to the drawing board. She still could not figure out the true meaning.

“It must be funny for them to read a letter from Taiwan, a country that is on the other side of the planet,” Professor Wu said in a voice that trembled from laughing. The only thing she could think of in response was “your reply is highly appreciated.” But she didn’t think it was the end of the world for her yet.

She decided to send an email to every department that caught her eyes. One was related to corporate tax, another responsible for property tax, and the other associated with fuel tax, and the only information that she received was that all the departments knew that she sent an email to each of the department, and among all the departments, nobody knew the key to her question.

Fortunately, on the verge of giving up, she received a letter from the management, who seemed to receive a letter forwarded by a person to whom Professor Wu sent a letter. It stated that they were not familiar with such a term either.

letter was sent back to them. Their response substantiated her presumption that the number “11” was merely made up.

Hewlett Hsiao, a translator who has been in the business for five years, couldn’t adore translators with such perseverance more. “I am in this profession and I know it. If I were the one who translated, I might not have been able to get to the bottom of every single word. People who are thorough in whatever task they have on hand are always admirable. I regard Rachel Yin-yin Wu as a role model.”

“You know, sometimes in the process of translating and interpreting, you encounter obstacles, but it is how one broadens his or her vision,” said Professor Wu. This was what Professor Wu has borne in her mind all along the many years of studying and working in the field of translation.

She added that she might not have the patience it took now. The fastidious care to minute details should be proper and not so excessive that it becomes trouble. A good practitioner should keep a balance between time and performance.

Hindrance is inclined to be what stops people from going forward, but in the world of translating and interpreting, it’s of significant difference. The obstacles are what drive translators through, because they learn from the processing of finding out their own insufficiencies in knowledge.

She was grateful to see the reply, and another gracious

