



Prof. An Zhishun gives talk on Chinese drum music

Prof. An Zhishun, a famous percussionist and composer from China, was at TNUA in March for a week-long visit, during which he gave a talk mainly on traditional Chinese drum music and helped arrange a concert by the university's teachers and students.

The 82-year-old professor, who was born in Shaanxi, western China, has made tremendous contributions to promoting traditional Chinese percussion music, having composed more than 100 pieces of music.

He has been invited to perform and give lectures in various countries and cities, such as Korea, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Russia, Sweden, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Bulgaria, Romania and Canada.

Prof. An, who arrived on March 1, has been to TNUA for many times since his first visit in 1989. In his talk on March 4, the professor shared his personal views about life and learning, as well as what he has learned through music.

He said the drum is a demonstration of strength,

a gem of wisdom, an expression of feelings and a call from the heart. He said he is in good health probably because playing the drum engages him in a lot of physical activities and gives him much excitement. The process of composing music also keeps the mind clear, he added.

He also gave an in-depth look at the development of drum music in China from a historical perspective.

Percussion teachers and students from the Department of Music also held a concert on March 7 to highlight Prof. An's music. The professor's son, Mr. An Yuan, had helped with the rehearsals for the concert.

Caption: Prof. An Zhishun gives a lecture on percussion music.



A cross-cultural discussion on Taiwan films

The Department of Filmmaking on February 25 arranged a discussion between Prof. Ronald Michael Norman and Prof. Wang Tung on the latter's "Strawman," and "Hill of No Return" – two films set in Taiwan under Japan's colonial rule.

Prof. Norman has a rich experience in Hollywood film production, having been the director and producer at the Los Angeles-based Horizon Productions.

He teaches various courses at TNUA, such as script editing, TV drama series, comedy studies and production budget management.

Prof. Norman has a deep understanding of the films that Prof. Wang – the incumbent chairperson of the Department of Filmmaking – has directed.

He said it is important to understand the meaning behind the story, including its historical, political and social context. Prof. Norman noted that "Strawman" represents the cultural differences and cruelty of war during Japan's colonial rule in Taiwan through black humor rather than vivid bloody scenes.

"Strawman" is a world-class film, Prof. Norman said. The plot is simple, but the details are intricate. The camera motion is precise, presenting a touching narrative.

Prof. Wang said he chose the colonial background for the two films because a filmmaker must understand his or own culture and identity before setting foot on the international stage.

He disclosed that he had spent almost 12 years studying Taiwan's history and decided to make a Taiwan trilogy (the third being "Banana Paradise").

Prof. Wang said film is meant to "move" the audience through sights and sounds. But the key point is how to convey real feelings rather than just offer empty and meaningless mixes of sights and sounds.

Caption: Prof. Wang Tung (left), chairperson of the Department of Filmmaking, has a discussion on his work with Prof. Ronald Michael Norman (center).