

Lingnan University

The Public Lecture of
Vincent Woo Distinguished Visiting Scholars Programme 2004

by
Professor Daniel W Y Kwok

on
“Querying the Discussions of Chinese Culture”

Wednesday 24 March 2004
5:00 – 6:15 pm

at Lam Woo Lecture Theatre, Main Building
Lingnan University
(Presentation in English)

Synopsis

More than a century’s discussion of Chinese culture invites a query of its persistence, properties, and historical significance. Why is it unrelenting? Why does it a century later seem so similar to a century ago? Is there a qualitative difference? Does a set Chinese culture exist? What is meant by *nei-wai* and *zhong-wai* (inner-outer and China-outside)? Is there more than one answer to “Are you Chinese?”?

These are a few of the more important questions asked when China faced “modernization” a century ago, and now as China encounters “globalization”. In all the querying, one may detect the historian’s preference for paying attention to cultural change rather than to a discussion of cultural merits, for being attentive to both the *great* and *little* traditions rather than to a defense of the one against the other, and for viewing Chinese culture in the context of world history.

Professor Daniel W Y Kwok

Professor emeritus of History

University of Hawaii

Professor DWY Kwok is a well-known scholar of Chinese thought and history. His study on the development of scientism in the early twentieth-century is considered a classic in the field. His interests and expertise in Chinese culture range from gardens to philosophy to political values to literature. He has edited volumes covering topics from Chinese cosmology and ontology to the Cultural Revolution. His essays, reviews, and lectures have also appeared in numerous books and academic journals.

Now professor emeritus at the University of Hawaii, Professor Kwok has contributed much to history scholarship throughout his career. He has particularly played an active role in advancing Asian studies, both in the United States and in Asia, serving on the editorial board of top-ranked journals and also as external examiner for major universities in Singapore and Hong Kong. He has promoted an understanding of Asia amongst the media by promoting in Hawaii a fellowship program for journalists, giving those active in the press an opportunity to study Asian dynamics full-time.

Professor Kwok is a familiar and respected figure in Hong Kong. He was educated at St. Paul's College in his youth and, as a professional, has held visiting scholar and professor positions at the University of Hong Kong. We are delighted to welcome him back.