

neglected. He has unlocked several riddles concerning official titles and also filled in blanks in the study of Tang officialdom to present a fascinating portrait of society in the middle Tang period.

Dr. Lai frequently came across references to official titles in the course of his studies on Tang history and poetry, indicating their importance to official and personal histories in the Tang period. Tang officialdom was a system of orderly advancement, in which official position was related to age, and this had an impact on the attitude of officials of the time. The content of Tang official records are often sketchy, but recently unearthed tomb inscriptions and other material have shed new light on errors in the T'ang liu-tian, T'ung-tian, and the two T'ang-shu. A recently created full-text database has also expedited research in this area and led to new scholarly interpretations on Tang history. Historians armed with these new historical resources can help to resolve the discrepancies between scholars of Tang

literature and Tang history over the same historical figure or event, and thereby uncover the true face of Tang history, and with it, the true meaning of the literature of the period. (Chinese text by Ms. Te-Erh Kao)

### ■ *CCS seminar on the Definition and Scope of Portraits*

Dr. Olga Gorodetskaya of the Russian Academy of Sciences presented a speech on “Outline of the Definition and Scope of Portraits” at a Center for Chinese Studies seminar held at the NCL on June 23. Dr. Gorodetskaya analyzed the forms of figures depicted in Chinese art to ascertain figures could be considered as portraits. She noted that there is a lack of consensus in academic circles on this point due to different definitions and scopes of portraits. Portrait theory originated in European contemporary culture, and such theories are not suitable for understanding portraits in other cultures. In order to understand portraits in Chinese culture, one needs to first expand the scope of this art form and set limits that apply across cultures. This would enable new understanding of portraits in Chinese culture and provide an outline for defining and setting the scope of portraits.

Dr. Olga earned her doctorate in history and is currently a researcher at the Oriental Studies Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences. She is a visiting scholar at the CCS, where she is researching ancient Chinese culture. (Chinese text by Te-Erh Kao)



*Dr. Lai Swee Fo (front, first from left) at a Center for Chinese Studies seminar held at the NCL.  
(Photo by Caesar Tsai)*



*Dr. Olga (left) at a Center for Chinese Studies seminar held at the NCL  
(Photo by Caesar Tsai)*

## NCL International Exchange Events

May 11:

Dr. Xu Yinchu, former head of the Library of Chinese Academy of Sciences, research librarian Wang Yingxue, and Dr. Zhou Qingshan of the Information Science Department at Beijing University visited the NCL during their participation in the “Chinese Media Digital Archive and News Markup Language Seminar.”



*Dr. Xu Yinchu (second from left) and Deputy Director-General Sung Chien-sheng of NCL (second from right)  
(Photo by Pinery S. Wu)*

June 3:

Dr. Fan Jinmin of the Department of History, Nanjing University and Mr. Zhang Chenfeng, director of the Institute of Chinese Economics and Society, visited the NCL.

June 10:

Ms. Kuang-tien Yao, a librarian at the Chinese Department of the Hamilton Library, University of Hawaii at Manoa visited the NCL.

June 27:

A delegation from the Run Run Shaw Library, City University of Hong Kong headed by library director Steve Hsianghoo Ching inspected digitization work at the NCL.



*Library Director Steve Hsianghoo Ching from the Run Run Shaw Library, City University of Hong Kong (center) with the Director-General Juang Fang-rung (right), Deputy Director-General Sung Chien-sheng of NCL (left)  
(Photo by Pinery S. Wu)*