

Murakami Haruki Center Celebrates Murakami's Award with an Intellectually Guided Reading

Campus focus

On November 15, the Center for Murakami Haruki Studies in Tamkang University held an intellectual reading event in the reading area on the 2nd floor of the library, inviting faculty and students who love Haruki Murakami to celebrate his receipt of the Princess of Asturias Award in Spain. The event featured insights from core members of the Murakami Haruki Center, including Director Chiu-Kuei Tzeng, Associate Director Chia-Lin Wang, Associate Professor Ling Yeh, and Assistant Professor Higuchi Tatsuroh. They provided scholarly perspectives for over 20 readers present, interpreting the charm of Haruki Murakami's novels with first-hand information.

Murakami becomes the first Japanese person to receive the literary award and the first person from Asia since the award's inception. To help readers understand this prestigious “Spanish Nobel Prize,” the organizers arranged for Dr. Ai-Ling Liou, the Chair of the Spanish Department, to introduce the history of Asturias and provide information about this year's award. Together, they reviewed the grand ceremony of the award presentation that took place that day.

At the award ceremony on October 20, King Felipe VI of Spain praised Murakami's works, stating that they “blend the Eastern and Western worlds, depicting scenes filled with music.” Dr. Chia-Lin Wang and Dr. Ling Yeh, without prior arrangement, both began the discussion with his bestselling work “Norwegian Wood,” exploring the connection between his writing and music. Dr. Wang mentioned Murakami's tendency to incorporate emotions and music titles into his works, which may be related to his experience managing a jazz bar. She also highlighted Murakami's versatile style, where various genres such as pop, rock, jazz, and opera melodies naturally emerge in his writing. Dr. Higuchi Tatsuroh emphasized the mysterious way in which Murakami's literature navigates between Japanese classical and Western

literature.

Dr. Tseng took the lead in interpreting Murakami's latest work from April of this year, “街 不確 壁” (The City and Its Uncertain Walls). She introduced this work, created by Murakami 40 years ago but never included in his complete works. She cited Murakami's exceptional postscript, where he referred to it as a “small bone stuck in the throat,” to emphasize the importance of this book. As a Murakami Haruki research scholar, she highly praised the novel for its surrealistic approach, continuing Murakami's allegorical style, and seamlessly blending the elements from many of his past works into a trilogy of life and death scenarios. She remarked, “It's not a cliché story written by an AI embodying Murakami rather, it is the culmination of 40 years of refinement, showcasing the mature soul of a novelist, leaving a significant mark on life. It is a masterpiece that brings everything together.”

Library Dean Sheue-Fang Song mentioned in her speech that the library has established a special collection webpage for Murakami Haruki. She encouraged everyone to check the webpage for relevant works. Dr. Wan-Bau Wu, the dean of the College of Foreign Languages, who recently published a new wuxia novel, expressed appreciation for the library's use of the reading area for small events. He looks forward to next year's “World Reading Day.”

After listening to the entire guided reading, a fan of Murakami Haruki and freshman from Japanese Department, Chi-Hsiang Lin expressed his appreciation for Murakami's use of Western culture and Japanese traditions, providing valuable insights into the study of cross-cultural communication and contemporary globalization. He believes that Murakami, through his unique narrative style and profound exploration of themes, depicts many unseen issues in society. This is different from traditional Japanese literature and should be a part that attracts the attention of our younger readers.





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