Teaching Aerial Photography in Rural Schools: Wen-yu Su’s Project “Hometown From Above” Expects More Attention

NCKU Press Center

Influence of Chi Po-lin’s “Beyond Beauty: Taiwan From Above” is ongoing and has inspired primary and secondary school students from the rural areas. In 2017, Professor Wen-yu Su of Dept. CSIE, NCKU, launched the rural children aerial filming project, “Hometown From Above.” The result presentation ceremony was held in Gezhi Hall in December 23rd to show these children’s achievement of telling their hometown stories by manipulating drone to shoot an extent of aerial photography after a few months’ training. Prof. Su expects the project to be promoted to other places by its every member. He hopes that it brings more enterprises and organizational units to provide sponsorship so that rural children can be exposed to new technologies and expand their horizons through aerial photography.

Principal Xu-Liang Hong of Qiao-Guang Elementary School, Nantou, one of the initiators of the Taiwan Plurkers on Education and Technology, will be the 2018 project coordinator to promote the “Little Director Training Camp.” The camp training will be given to 1 teacher plus 3~5 students from each of the five schools. The progress will be made every two months by professional support tutors who will discuss amendments to shooting content and help develop students’ ability of story-telling, shooting and editing skills, and oral expressions. The result presentation in December, 2018, expects to teach rural students humanistic solicitude, multi-perspectives, and the attitude to learning and critical thinking linked with the concept of land. Principal Hong hopes enterprises and individuals will help promote the project.

Hui-Chun Yeh, a sixth-grade at Jhong-Jheng Elementary School in Ren-ai Township, Nantou, said, through the aerial filming, they found out their tribe (Take-Tudu Bunun Tribe) is so big and beautiful. In January 2017, she and her classmates, Yin-Jing Liao and Yu-Jou Kao, live broadcast play away to their tribe. She then went on to practice manipulating drone under Zhi-Wei Gao’s guidance, and participated in the project. Hao-En Wu said Rainbow Valley is a place where every member of Take-Tudu Bunun Tribe would visit in their childhood. Through aerial photography, they saw Rainbow Valley from a different angle, and aerial viewed the flash of fish in the crystal stream.
when they first started playing drone. Zuo-Zhen Junior High School had conducted an aerial photography course before the project. Yi-Xuan Lin also said, when she first started practicing manipulating an aerial camera, she was so afraid that she might accidentally let the drone hit the wall, but now she is familiar with it.

Wei-Ting Lin of Zuo-Zhen Junior High was well-versed in aerial photography and was self-taught in film editing before being promoted to lead his underclassmen. He took the lead in filming short films on cycling, graduation trips and other activities. Ding-Rong Luo said there were many school associations in Zuo-Zhen and the aerial photography was especially enjoyable.

Principal Yi-Xing Cai of Zuo-Zhen Junior High said rural students are generally slow learners. However, as such a specialized course like aerial filming breaks the framework of traditional education, it helps students learn faster and better through playing and learning how to operate drone, and gradually regain motivation, initiative and enthusiasm to explore knowledge.

President Huey-Jen Jenny Su attended the ceremony, interacting with these students. She agreed with the project whose objective is to encourage students to develop their multi-perspectives and have the confidence to believe in and challenge themselves and to seek for concrete evidence. She said, “People who stand in different height have very different perspectives. It is humanistic solicitude and vitality that can never be replaced by artificial intelligence. With this belief, let us help students grow.”

Prof. Su said the project leads children to self-explore with their support tutors. He hopes the project will be implemented with a record of the township in each season and will be the most complete Homeland Records in Taiwan.

In August 2017, Zuo-Zhen Junior High School, Tai-Ping Elementary School, Jhong-Jheng Elementary School, and Fa-Chi Elementary School started their “Hometown From Above” project. Principal Yi-Xing Cai conducted a youtuber, 360 landscape photography and aerial photography training courses. Kui-Han Lu of Hualien Education Network Center instructed students to practice aerial photography as well as Scratch aerial trajectory simulation to let the aircraft automatically calculate the flight distance. Heng-Cheng Su of Songshan High School of Agriculture and Industry helped students build Maker spirit, providing schools with drone-related technical assistance.

Gao said, when the students started playing drone, they first aerial viewed their homes. Such a sentiment also felt by those from Fa-Chi Elementary School in Bukai, Nantou. The fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade students introduced the architectural landmark of their hometown such as schools, churches, water-pipe bridges, and so on.

Students from Tai-Ping Elementary School, Zhuoxi, Hualien, also introduced the tribal scenery they shot, including the churches and valleys. They had trouble when they first started playing drone. Zuo-Zhen Junior High School had conducted an aerial photography course before the project. Yi-Xuan Lin also said, when she first started practicing manipulating an aerial camera, she was so afraid that she might accidentally let the drone hit the wall, but now she is familiar with it.
Messaoud Romdhani, one of the members of the Nobel-winning Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, came to NCKU to give a speech about the hope and challenge which are faced by Tunisian Youth and share the experience of the democratization of Tunisia.

The Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet is a group of four organizations, including the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT), The Tunisian Confederation of Industry, the Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA), the Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH), and the Tunisian Order of Lawyers (TOL). After the 2011 Jasmine Revolution, the country was in turmoil. The Quartet was thus established to bridge the gap between governments and citizens and build a pluralistic democracy, facilitating the conversations among different parties.

In the speech, he emphasized the importance of democracy and social justice. He said that, even though we have different skin colors or religions, we share the same aspiration for freedom and deserve respect from others. Democracy and social justice are indispensable.

He stated that the Jasmine Revolution was not an event of a time but an accumulation of discontent throughout those years. What people were against was not just the president but the entire system. At that time, the educated youth with the school certificates had no future; therefore, they stood up calling for freedom, dignity, social justice, and were against corruption.

Never had he seen such resilience in the youth. He said that we should not underestimate the youth power. During the revolution, they helped spread the information via social media such as Facebook and Twitter. This is one of the keys to the success of the revolution.

Romdhanim was glad to see that most of the audience today were the youth who are about the same age as those engaged in the Jasmine Revolution 7 years ago. He encouraged students to not only pay attention to their studies but also the future of both their country and all human beings. He pointed out that the forum today was a good example to familiarize students with any current global issues.

The Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet has established an alternative peaceful political process during the Tunisia’s transition to democracy. It helped avoid the rise of populism and the explosion of civil war. In 2015, the Quartet was awarded the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize for its contribution to the building of a pluralistic democracy in Tunisia.

Apart from the forum, NCKU displayed relevant books at the first floor of the main library by December 22nd, including A Rage for Order: The Middle East in Turmoil, from Tahrir Square to ISIS, The Dictator’s Learning Curve: Inside the Global Battle for Democracy, and Tunisia: economic, political and social issues, and many E-books.
NCKU Receives Donation of ¥49.39 Million as Memorial Scholarship for Prof. Iso Momose and Ms. Miyoko Izumi

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National Cheng Kung University (NCKU) President Huey-Jen Jenny Su received a donation of 49.39 million yen from Mr. Kohei and Mr. Seiji Izumi on September 9 as a memorial scholarship for their grandfather, Professor Iso Momose, and their mother, Ms. Miyoko Izumi. They also jointly planted a tree beside the NCKU Museum to commemorate the father and daughter.

Professor Iso Momose started his academic career in 1932 at the Tainan Technical College (TTC, today’s NCKU), specializing in organic chemistry. After World War II, he continued his teaching and research at TTC until he was repatriated to Japan with his family in 1947. His health worsened in 1985 and he passed away four years later at the age of 87.

Ms. Miyoko Izumi, born in Taiwan, passed away in 2015. In 2005 she wrote a will donating half of her property to NCKU as a scholarship in the name of her father and herself.

Professor Momose was one of the first faculty members at NCKU. Among the earliest academic publications that have been found at NCKU, 16 of the 18 papers are co-authored by Professor Momose. “It shows not only Professor Momose’s achievements, but also one of the important historic tracks of NCKU as a research-oriented university,” said President Su.

President Su pointed out that Ms. Izumi was fortunate to complete her higher education during the post-war hardship due to her father’s insight, which inspired her to donate the scholarship.

Mr. Kohei Izumi gave an emotional speech and shed tears at the ceremony. He said although he hardly had the chance to see his mother during her last 10 years, he felt he reunited with her in the present moment.

Ms. Izumi left a letter to her sons. The letter says, “I sincerely believe that the dead can be reborn in the memory of the living. I hope that through my donation of the scholarship that my father’s soul could come back to the NCKU campus whenever the name of Iso
Momose flashes through the minds of the students, so that he could continue his research on organic chemistry. Thus, I will die with no regret.”

NCKU will host memorial activities for Professor Momose in the future, including documentary exhibitions and scholarship awarding ceremonies. The scholarship will benefit the students of the Department of Chemical Engineering and the Department of Chemistry.