

FOUNDER CLEMENT CHANG: “FINDING THE POSITIVE BLACK SWAN!”

TKU Founder, Dr. Clement Chang was invited to lift the curtain for the “Black Swan Exhibition Hall” in the opening ceremony, on February 23, 2009. His address is as follows.

The project of futurization has been practiced for more than thirty years. We had established Graduate Institute for Future Studies, nurtured many teachers and scholars of futurology, and founded an internationally famous Journal of Future Studies, held international conferences and forums. The objective is to foster TKU students with perceptive future prospects and for engaging in future creation.

However, so far as we know, no matter what methodology we used in exploring the future, there is only 50% certainty in our researches. The certainty and the uncertainty occupy in a halfway house. The speculation of the future involves inexhaustible complexity. As we read from history, many unexpected events happened to our surprise, such as the 911 terrorist attack in 2001, and the global financial tsunami of 2008. These events could be called “black swan” events.

The Black Swan is a 2007 bestseller by Nassim Nicholas Taleb. “The black swan” is a metaphor for something unthinking of. When Australia was unexplored, the Western world believes that swan must be white. Nobody can think of any swan in other colors. This is because people use the limited knowledge to judge something unknown. Hence, the things unknown could be neglected. Crucial signals and messages for disaster could be neglected in this way. Taleb believes that “the black swan” hides in everything. If the unpredictable happens, the impact would be immeasurable. The purpose

of future studies is not only to evaluate the certain unknown but also to excavate the uncertain unknown so that we may prevent many negative “black swan.” In our life, we may encounter many “black swans.” We have to learn to prevent risk and enhance the possibility of success.

To name the new exhibition space by “The Black Swan” is to highlight the futuristic perspective with a precaution—not to insist on our expectation and prediction of the future. Every exhibition in this space would be regarded an “black swan event” —an positive one, which may entice us to explore the uncertain unknown by uncertain known. (~Chen Chi-szu)

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