

**NNCT Seminar: “The origins of moral-political philosophy in early China - categories of humanness, justice and personal freedom”**

**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> of October, 2022

**Time:** 1400-1600 (HELSINKI TIME (GMT +3h ),

**Place:** University of Lapland, Lecture hall 2 (LS2)

**Zoom-link:** <https://eoppimispalvelut.zoom.us/j/64656074979>

**ID link to Zoom:** 646 5607 4979

**Passcode:** 312295

**Moderator:** Professor Matti Nojonen

NNCT has the honor to have Professor Tao Jiang as the key-note speaker on his most recent book “Origins of Moral-Political Philosophy in Early China” (Oxford UP, 2021).

**Program:**

**14.00-14.40**

“The Origins of Moral-Political Philosophy in Early China – Contestation of Humaneness, Justice and Personal Freedom”

Tao Jiang

Professor of Classical Chinese and Mahāyāna Buddhist Philosophies at Rutgers University

**14.40-15.00**

Commentary notes and Q&A

Torbjörn Lodén

Head of the Stockholm China Center at ISDP, emeritus professor of Chinese language and culture at Stockholm University Professor Emeritus, China Studies Stockholm University

**15.00-15.20**

“The evolution of concept *ren* (humanness) in Confucian philosophy”

Jyrki Kallio

Senior Research Fellow at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Docent in International Relations and Chinese Studies at the University of Lapland

**15.20-15.40**

“Distanciation, Appropriation and Recontextualization: Applying Ricoeur’s Hermeneutics to Intercultural Philosophy”

Geir Sigurðsson

Professor of Chinese studies and philosophy, University of Iceland

**15.40-16.00**

“Summary remarks and few words on the role of concepts in Chinese traditional thought” and Q&A

Matti Nojonen

Professor of Chinese society and culture, University of Lapland

**Synopsis:**

Professor Tao Jiang will remap the intellectual landscape of classical Chinese philosophy through key categories of humanness, justice and personal freedom. These categories and their early narrative formed the conceptual framework for the still on-going Chinese negotiation between the personal, the familial and the political domain, as well as the partialist humanness and impartialist

justice in Chinese societies. Professor Emeritus Torbjörn Lodén will provide commentary notes on Jiang's presentation. Jiang's speech will be based on his new celebrated book "The Origins of Moral-Political Philosophy in Early China" (Oxford UP, 2021).

Senior Research Fellow Jyrki Kallio will briefly discuss the evolution of the concept of *ren* (humanness) in Confucian philosophy. His presentation is based on his recently published book "Avain kungfutselaisuuteen – valittuja kirjoituksia kolmelta vuosituhannelta" (Key to Confucianism – selected texts from three millenia), Gaudeamus Press, 2022. Jyrki Kallio aims to show how translating ancient Chinese concepts, and realizing that often no translation is universally valid across different eras, may promote an understanding of the organic character of Chinese thought.

Professor Geir Sigurðsson will outline his argument that continental European philosophy, especially hermeneutics, offers largely unexploited but promising resources for the practice of and approach to cross-cultural philosophy. His talk will focus on several hermeneutic notions presented and elaborated by Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur. On a deeper level, it will be argued, these notions reveal that the practice of philosophy, in particular in a cross-cultural context, requires that the mainstream Western or Anglo-American (analytical) understanding of philosophy as a pursuit of truth needs to be at least significantly softened.

Professor Matti Nojonen will provide summary notes on the presentations elaborating on the concepts in traditional Chinese thought. Concepts and conceptualization of thoughts or ideational structures and practices played a particularist role in traditional Chinese thought. Concepts in many cases can be at the same time nouns (abstractions of thought) but can also be read as verbs (practicing the abstraction of thoughts). This dual role gives concepts plasticity as they are at the same time abstractions of thought and practices having the function of generating societal efficacy. This approach demarcates from Western tradition where concepts are static clearly defined nouns with emphasis on detailed depictions of their ontological structures.

### **Bio of the speakers:**

Tao Jiang is Professor of Classical Chinese and Mahāyāna Buddhist Philosophies at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, US. He is the author of *Origins of Moral-Political Philosophy in Early China: Contestation of Humaneness, Justice, and Personal Freedom* (Oxford University Press, 2021) and *Contexts and Dialogue: Yogācāra Buddhism and Modern Psychology on the Subliminal Mind* (University of Hawaii Press, 2006). He is the co-editor of *The Reception and Rendition of Freud in China: China's Freudian Slip* (Routledge, 2013). Jiang chairs the Department of Religion and directs the Center for Chinese Studies at Rutgers. He is also a co-chair of the Neo-Confucian Studies Seminar at Columbia University.

Torbjörn Lodén is head of the Stockholm China Center at ISDP, emeritus professor of Chinese language and culture at Stockholm University and a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities. From 1973 to 1976 he served as Swedish cultural attaché to China, and he has been a visiting professor in Hong Kong and Beijing. His main research interest is Chinese intellectual history. He has published numerous works on Chinese thought, history, and politics, for example *Samtalen med Konfucius* (a Swedish translation of the Confucian Analects, 2016), *Kinas vägval – från himmelskt imperium till global stormakt* [China's choice of road – from celestial empire to global great power, 2012], and *Rediscovering Confucianism* (2006).

Jyrki Kallio is Senior Research Fellow at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, and holds the Title of Docent (*venia docendi*) in International Relations and Chinese Studies at the University of

Lapland. His research foci include Chinese political culture and foreign policy, and regional issues in East Asia. He has a special interest in the instrumentalization of traditional schools of thought in East Asian politics, and in addition to his research, has translated classical Chinese philosophy and prose. Previously, he served the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland as diplomat. He holds degrees of MSocSc (International Relations) and PhD (Chinese Society Studies).

Geir Sigurðsson is professor of Chinese studies and philosophy at University of Iceland, and guest professor at Ningbo University, P.R. China. His research interests focus on Chinese philosophy (primarily classical), cross-cultural philosophical interpretations, hermeneutic theory, philosophy of education, and he is currently exploring the theme of world philosophy of ageing. His most recent books are *Confucian Propriety and Ritual Learning: A Philosophical Interpretation* (2015) and an annotated translation from Chinese into Icelandic of Sunzi's *Art of War*, *Hernaðarlist Meistara Sun* (2019).

Matti Nojonen is professor of Chinese society and culture at the University of Lapland. His research interests focus both on contemporary Chinese society and internationalization of Chinese economy, and on traditional Chinese strategic thinking. Nojonen is currently working on book manuscript "The Art of Stratagem – the Philosophy of Chinese Strategic Thinking". He has published Finnish language translation of Sunzi Art of War (Sunzi Sodankäynnin taito, 2005) and Finnish language translations from 64 traditional Chinese strategy classics (Jymäyttämisen taito, 2007).