



Three Chinese Views of Intuition

Thursday, October 5, 2023, 18:00–20:00

University of Zurich, Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies, Room ZUB 416, Zürichbergstrasse 4, 8032 Zurich

Public Lecture by Prof. Dr. Lisa Raphals (University of California at Riverside)

This lecture offers three distinct approaches to the logic of intuition in early China. The first is an overview of the influence of the work of A. C. Graham on the Zhuangzi. In a series of influential studies he argued that this great Daoist text offered a model of know-how (rather than propositional) knowledge grounded in irrationality and awareness. His work led to debates about rationality in early Chinese thought, the status of skill knowledge, and debates about the nature and logic of the Classical Chinese language. The second topic is the broad heading of “what is so of itself” (ziran), sometimes mistranslated as spontaneity. This topic includes accounts of “acting without acting” (wuwei), and claims that being correctly “aligned”

(zheng) can lead to efficacious and effortless action. The third topic is accounts of skill or skilled or virtuosic performance. Skill figures in accounts of ethics, of the importance of “know-how” knowledge in narratives about skill, and of action characterized by virtuosity or even what theories of happiness have called “flow.” The essay will briefly touch on other perspectives, such as the relation of spirit, mind, and body; and cognitively oriented studies of “intuitive” behavior.

Lisa Raphals is a Distinguished Professor of Chinese/Comparative Literature at the University of California at Riverside.

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