

CHINESISCHE PHILOSOPHIE

Blockseminar

Roger T. Ames (Peking University): Daoism

Mi. 23.1.19 von 10-12 Uhr im UG des Instituts für Philosophie, Habelschwerdter Allee 30

Session #1: An Interpretive Context

Reading:

Introduction pp. 1-54

Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall,

Daodejing: Making this Life Significant

A close reading of the Daoist texts—in this case, the Daodejing—must begin from establishing its interpretative context: the historical and intellectual milieu in which this text was compiled. A generation ago, we would be relying upon a Song dynasty (960–1279) version of this text, but recent archaeological finds in China have recovered a partial version text that dates to ca. 300 BCE that includes previously unknown passages on the early cosmology, and more complete redactions of the text that date from 168 BCE.

A common denominator among the early Chinese canons—Confucian, Daoist, Mohist, Legalist, Militarist, and so on—is the shared cosmological assumptions that are given summary in the “Dazhuan” (or “Great Tradition”) commentary of the Yijing (or Book of Changes). We will review some excerpts from this text, and appeal to a set of seven postulates that the contemporary Chinese philosopher, Tang Junyi, uses to characterize its natural process cosmology.

The Daodejing itself is structured around cluster of key philosophical terms that begin with dao 道 and de 德. Indeed, the first reference to the Daoist lineage describes it as “the lineage of dao and de” rather than just “Daoism.” We will need to explore the “wu 無-forms”—wuwei 無為 (“non-coercive acting”), wuyu 無欲 (“objectless desiring”), wuzhi 無知 (“unprincipled knowing”), wushi 無事 (“non-interfering doing”), wuxin 無心 (“unmediated thinking and feeling”), as well as he 和 (“optimizing harmony”), tian 天 (nature and the numinous), shengren 聖人 (“sages”), qi 氣 (“qi”), and so on. One goal of the seminar will be to take the tradition on its own terms—that is, to become familiar with its own Daoist vocabulary.

Mi. 30.01.2019 von 10-12 Uhr im UG des Instituts des Instituts für Philosophie, Habelschwerdter Allee 30

Session #2: Reading the Daodejing

Selected chapters will be assigned to participants and explored under the following rubrics:

Cosmology: 1, 2, 6, 25, 42, 51; Optimizing harmony: 8, 28, 39, 49, 54, 64, 67; Wu-forms: 3, 34, 43, 63; Values: 18, 19, 38, 52, 53; Emptiness: 4, 11; Military: 30, 31, 46, 68, 69; Governance: 17, 24, 26, 27, 29, 48, 57, 58, 60, 61; Way-making (dao): 21, 37, 41, 47, 55; Death: 50, 73, 74, 75, 76, 80

Mi. 06.02.2019 von 10-12 Uhr im UG des Instituts des Instituts für Philosophie, Habelschwerdter Allee 30

Session #3: The Zhuangzi

Reading: Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings, trans. Brook Ziporyn
Introduction, pp. vi-xxviii

Zhuangzi and the Happy Fish, ed. Roger T. Ames and Nakajima Takahiro
Introduction, pp.

The second seminal text in the philosophical Daoism tradition is the Zhuangzi. One of the questions that we will ponder is: Why is this text in the tradition coupled with the Daodejing? What are their commonalities? What are their differences?

As with the Daodejing, we will try to allow the text to speak for itself by developing a nuanced understanding of a cluster of several key philosophical terms: yan 言 (“words”), you 遊 (“rambling, musing”), wang 忘 (“forgetting”), zhi 知 (“knowing/realizing”), wuhua 物化 (“transforming together with things”), sishengyiti 死生一體 (“the inseparability of living and dying”).

We will explore each one of these terms with selected anecdotes from the text.

Mi. 13.02.2019 von 10-12 Uhr im UG des Instituts des Instituts für Philosophie, Habelschwerdter Allee 30

Session #4: The Huainanzi

Reading: Tracing Dao to its Source, trans. D.C. Lau and Roger T. Ames
Introduction, pp. 3-59

Tracing Dao to Its Source is the opening fascicle of the Huainanzi . The Huainanzi is a early Han dynasty (late second-century BCE) compendium of knowledge covering every subject from astronomy and calendrics to governance and the art of warfare. The early Han dynasty was a formative period in what we might call “Han thinking”—a syncretic and hybridic way of thinking and living that came and continues to be in some ways defining of what we think of as “Chinese.” If we speak Chinese, Chinese are “Han people” (Hanren 漢人) and they speak “Han language” (Hanyu 漢語) and write “Han characters” (Hanzi 漢字). And Tracing Dao to Its Source is one of the earliest and most seminal texts that illustrates how Han thinkers came to see their world. Just as the Han court’s consolidation of empire was to shape the geographical and political identity of the Chinese for the following two millennia, so the emergence of its intellectual world set the formal structures of its literary and aesthetic culture.

We will use this text as a way of thinking through how the Daodejing and the Zhuangzi are absorbed and transformed into an eclectic way of thinking—what we might call an “optimizing symbiosis”—that continues down to the present day.

Das Blockseminar wird in einer **Arbeitsgruppe** vorbereitet, die im WS 2018/19 von Frau Nathalie Chamat (n.chamat@web.de) geleitet wird. Ort: UG des Instituts für Philosophie; Zeit: freitags von 12-14 Uhr

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