



EACP  
EUROPEAN  
ASSOCIATION  
FOR  
CHINESE  
PHILOSOPHY

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## MESSAGE FROM THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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This newsletter is the first newsletter of the 'European Association for Chinese Philosophy'. As you will read further on in this newsletter, this association was established in Ljubljana in 2014.

The association will mainly communicate with its members and all those interested in the activities of the association through its website (<http://www.ea-cp.eu/>), but it will also publish an electronic newsletter twice a year. This first newsletter is therefore an exception as it is also distributed in paper.

As always, a newsletter is and will remain the product of its members. For the benefit of all those interested in Chinese philosophy, I therefore kindly invite you to send me any information of which you think it might be of interest for your colleagues in Chinese philosophy for inclusion in the association's newsletter.

Contributions should be sent by E-mail. Please remember to check your copy carefully before sending it. Workshop and conference reports should not exceed 600 words. Calls for papers should not exceed 100 words. Remember to include all relevant information when contributing new book titles (author, title, publication place, publisher, year, pp., price in EURO and ISBN). Names and titles in non-Latin script (Cyrillic, Chinese, ...) are welcome provided that the author's name is in transcription and a short content summary in English is included.

Every effort is made to include all relevant news, but the Editor reserves the

right to edit all contributions for publication.

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## REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Dear colleagues and friends!

I would like to extend my warmest greetings to all the members of the European Association for Chinese Philosophy, founded in Ljubljana in October 2014. Enclosed is the report of the inaugural session and the 1<sup>st</sup> session of the General Assembly of the EACP.

This is the first newsletter of the association, which aims to create a vigorous intellectual community in the field of Chinese thought and Chinese intellectual history, with scholars and learners in proximity to each other, ready and willing to engage in Chinese philosophy as well as with other thinkers and doers throughout Europe, China and the rest of the world.

Whenever we speak of Chinese philosophy, we must inevitably consider the appropriateness of this term. Due to the fact that the general theory and genuine philosophical aspects of Chinese thought have rarely been treated by Western scholars, they namely continue to remain quite obscure for the majority of them. Therefore, from the very beginning of our common work, we must – once again – very briefly examine the fundamental question (or dilemma) of whether it is possible to speak of traditional Chinese thought as philosophy at all.

In his article entitled “*There is no need for Zhongguo zhexue to be philosophy*”, Ouyang Min – as many other scholars – argues that philosophy is a Western cultural practice and cannot refer to traditional Chinese thinking unless in an analogical or metaphorical sense. Hence, he proposes to replace the term “Chinese philosophy” with the notion “*sinosophy*”. However the original meaning of this notion, which represents a compound of the ancient Greek meanings for “China” and “Wisdom” is, in fact, nothing other than the translation of the Western expression “Chinese wisdom” into ancient Greek language. The philosophizing or abstract traditions within Chinese thought, on the other hand, go far beyond the sole notion or the discourses of wisdom; therefore, they cannot be reduced to it.

It is certainly not the intention of our association to reinterpret Chinese tradition in terms of Western concepts, as philosophy as an academic discipline has arisen from the essential human need to philosophize. This

need or this feature of human thought and sentiment is something universal, as for instance, the human ability to generate language. Although the ability or the potential to create language and thus linguistic communication is universal, each individual language and the grammatical structures by which it is defined, is culturally conditioned. Thus, the expression "Chinese philosophy" does not refer to a geographic dimension of this universal term, but is rather an expression of the cultural conditionality which defines a certain form of philosophizing, or of a certain system of philosophical thought with a typical paradigmatic structure. As Carine Defoort exposes, we are perfectly accustomed to use "Continental" or "Anglo-Saxon" philosophy, denoting different types or genres within the philosophical tradition, however the problem with the term Chinese philosophy goes further.

The simplest and most frequent argument against the notion of "Chinese philosophy" is based on the assumption that philosophy as such designates a system of thought which arose exclusively within the so-called European tradition. In this context, philosophy is thus defined as a theoretical discipline which is based on the specific and unique premises and methods of the Western humanities. According to this supposition, every system of thought which arose within the context of any other tradition is thus necessarily unscientific (or at least irrational) and cannot be regarded as philosophical.

In methodological terms, this argument is Eurocentric par excellence,

especially if we consider the etymology of the term 'philosophy'. As every child knows, philosophy originally meant the love of wisdom. Can anyone seriously maintain that Plato, Socrates or Aristotle loved wisdom more than Laozi, Zhuangzi or Wang Shouren?

On a somewhat more complex level, the assumption that the word "philosophy" in the European tradition signifies a special kind of love of wisdom also holds good; in our tradition, it means a kind of wisdom that deals with specific questions of metaphysics, ontology, phenomenology, epistemology and logic. None of these clearly defined disciplines were ever developed in traditional China. However, though more differentiated, this argument still lacks a rational basis: firstly, because Chinese philosophy is, in fact, not a philosophy in the traditional European sense, but a different philosophical discourse, based on different methodology and with different theoretical concerns and secondly, because traditional Chinese thought also developed certain clearly differentiated forms of inquiry which greatly differ from those which were generally developed within classical European discourse.

Indeed, one could argue in the same manner that traditional European philosophy is not a complete philosophy, since it never developed any of the most significant philosophical categories and methods which form the core of traditional Chinese theoretical discourse, such as the method of correlative thought, binary categories or the paradigm of immanent tran-

scendence. If we wished to be provocative, we could even invert the argument and state that the opposite was true, that it is European thought which cannot be considered as true philosophy, for if philosophy is the love of wisdom, then philosophy as a scientific discipline with its rigid, almost technocratically delimited categorical and terminological apparatus (precisely that discourse which, in Europe and throughout the world, is considered as philosophy in a strict, essential sense) cannot be regarded as philosophy at all. At best, it can be considered as “philosophology”, in the sense of teaching, researching and writing about the love of wisdom.

In her famous article “*Is there such a thing as Chinese philosophy*” Carine Defoort also states a position which is not grounded upon an absolute denial, but neither on an absolute affirmation of the question. In this context, it could be said that the tradition of the “Chinese masters” (*zi*) is comparable with the wider Western philosophical tradition (and not merely its modern variant) to a degree that “allows us” to denote it as philosophy, since these discourses are, after all, posing questions of deep human concern while substantiating the ideas they contain with rational arguments. On the other hand, this position points to the fact that the Chinese themes and forms of reasoning are sometimes so fundamentally different from those of their Western counterparts that they offer a unique opportunity to question, in a critical and philosophical manner, the currently prevailing notion of “philosophy” itself.

Sinologists, especially when in contact with scholars belonging to other areas of humanities, are often confronted with the necessity of explaining certain specific features of traditional Chinese thought, its epistemological roots and its methodology. This interdisciplinary issue, however, has been preconditioned by a necessity to clarify and to define certain concepts and categories, which have been rooted in East Asian traditions.

Over the past few decades, the previously “absurd” assumption that the “Western” theory of knowledge does not constitute the sole, universally valid epistemological discourse, something which would have been unthinkable for the majority of “Western” theorists less than a century ago, has now become a generally recognized fact among most present-day cultural exponents and communities. It has become clear to most people that “Western epistemology” represents only one of many different forms of historically transmitted social models for the perception and interpretation of reality.

Recognizing the comprehension, analysis and transmission of reality based on diversely structured socio-political contexts as a categorical and essential postulate offers the prospect of enrichment. Hence, instead of following the rudimentary horizon of Western discursive patterns and problems, we should try to approach the Chinese tradition from the perspective of language and writing, to which it belongs. If we try to follow the inherent laws of its specific concepts, we can gain a completely different, much

more autochthonous and much less “exotic” image of this tradition. But how can we bridge the abyss between different cultures, if we no longer possess a generally valid, commonly shared horizon of problems? Certainly not by trying to “think like the Chinese”, in the sense of using some different logic. We should, as proposed by Chad Hansen and Heiner Roetz, seek to establish a methodology of intercultural research in accordance with the principles of so-called “hermeneutic humanism”.

Humanism is namely representing the keynote in Chinese philosophy: human beings are in the forefront of Chinese philosophers and human society has occupied their attention throughout the ages. For centuries, Chinese philosophy has, similar to other philosophies all over the world, been the central driving force for creating ideas and shaping knowledge which forms and develops human understanding, launches human curiosity, and inspires human creativity.

I firmly believe that dialogues between different forms of such intellectual creativity are not only possible, but also a most sensible thing to do. If we consider their value and significance within the framework of contemporary global developments, we can with an easy conscience ask ourselves what role will be played, and what share modern and adequate reinterpretations of classical Chinese philosophy will have in this process.

Hence, I hope you enjoy being part of this association and thinking about ideas found in Chinese philosophy,

and I look forward to our unceasing debates about them.

It is my immense pleasure to announce the first opportunity for such a rewarding exchange: it awaits us in June 2016 at the 1<sup>st</sup> EACP conference that will take place at the Vilnius University in Lithuania and will be organized by the vice-president of the association, Vytis Silius from Lithuania.

I look forward to seeing you there, and wish you all the best.

Sincerely,

Jana S. Rošker  
President of the EACP

## **REPORT FROM THE TREASURER**

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After the establishment of the EACP, the association’s account was opened at Nova Ljubljanska Banka bank in Ljubljana, and the electronic banking system was established for our account.

Financially, the first year was fairly uneventful, the incomes consisting exclusively of membership fees and the biggest expense being the annual fee that had to be paid to the accountancy firm for the preparation of the obligatory annual financial report (183 Euro). The accountancy firm that was

selected is Anteia (<http://www.bizi.si/ANTEIA-D-O-O-LJUBLJANA/>).

The balance in the checking account as of June 6<sup>th</sup> 2015 was 333,70 Euro.

Helena Motoh  
Treasurer

### **REPORT OF THE INAUGURAL SESSION AND THE 1<sup>st</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE EACP**

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The inaugural session of the European Association of Chinese Philosophy (EACP) took place on October 5<sup>th</sup> 2014 in Ljubljana.

It was followed by the session of the General Assembly, which made the following decisions:

1. The General Assembly has nominated the members of the Board and of the Executive committee, whose mandates, rights and duties are defined by the statutes of the association.
2. The Executive Committee, which represents the central part of the Board, consists of the following members:
  - President: Jana Rošker
  - Vice president: Vytis Silius
  - Treasurer: Helena Motoh
  - Secretary: Bart Dessein
3. The Board consists of the following members:
  - Jana Rošker
  - Vytis Silius

- Helena Motoh
- Bart Dessein
- Ralph Weber
- Ivana Buljan
- Lun Du

4. In addition to the board members, the General Assembly also nominated local representatives of different European regions (countries) who will be responsible for the dissemination and collection of information, relevant for the Association, in their particular areas (countries). The General Assembly nominated the following local representatives:

- Austria: Raoul D. Findeisen
- Belgium: Bart Dessein
- Croatia: Ivana Buljan
- Czech Republic: Jan Vrhovski
- Germany: Christian Soffel
- Great Britain: Aleksandra Kubat
- Iceland: Geir Sigurdsson
- Israel: Gad C. Isay
- Italy: Tiziana Lippiello
- Lithuania: Vytis Silius
- Poland: Marcin Jacoby
- Serbia: Jelena Gledić
- Slovak Republic: Jana Benicka
- Slovenia: Tea Sernelj
- Switzerland: Ralph Weber

5. The General Assembly also decided that the Association can include members from around the world, however, the Board and Executive Committee members have to be linked with a European academic institution.
6. The EACP will be organizing biannual conferences on Chinese philosophy. The attendance at the conference will

be limited to the members of the Association. The chief organizer of each conference, who will be approved by the Board members, will overtake the function of the vice-president of the Association for the organizing time, unless he/she rejects the function.

7. The first conference will be organized in 2016. Vytis Silius from Vilnius University has proposed to organize it at his own university. He will send to the Board members a proposal with detailed information about the aims, the scope and feasibility (spaces, infrastructure, administrative team and financial funding) of the conference until the end of this year. After receiving the proposal, the Board members will decide upon the details.
8. The EACP website will be completed and modified in accordance with the aims and needs of the Association. It will include the electronic membership application and the bank account on which the members can transfer their membership fees.
9. The Board has decided that the membership fee will amount to 20€ (10€ for students).
10. To avoid the transfer provision, the following EACP members have already paid their membership fees directly to the treasurer at the inaugural session:
  - Jana Rošker
  - Tea Sernelj
  - Geir Sigurðsson
  - Bart Dessein
  - Fabian Heubel
  - Andrej Ule
  - Ralph Weber

- Jelena Gledić
- Jan Vrhovski
- Lun Du
- Gad C. Isay
- Natasa Vampelj
- Raoul D. Findeisen
- Ivana Buljan
- Helena Motoh

For those who need an official receipt confirmation for the purpose of re-funding, please turn directly to the treasurer, Helena Motoh (Helena.motoh@guest.arnes.si )

11. The English version of the statutes of the Association will also be available to all the members through the EACP website immediately after its modification.

Jana S. Rošker  
EACP president

Ljubljana, 20.10.2014

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## **VILNIUS CONFERENCE 2016**

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### **“THINKING ACROSS THE BORDERS: PHILOSOPHY AND CHINA”**

**Inaugural Biennial Conference  
of European Association for Chinese  
Philosophy (EACP), Vilnius University**

**June 9-11, 2016**

Scholars with interests in topics and problems where philosophy gets in touch with China and China gets in touch with philosophy are invited to submit proposals for individual papers or panels, or to register as

non-presenters at the Inaugural Biennial Conference of European Association for Chinese Philosophy (EACP), organized by Vilnius University Centre of Oriental Studies.

**Deadlines:**

- *Individual* paper and *Panel* proposals should be submitted by **January 10, 2016**
- *Student* paper abstracts for *Young Scholar Award* should be submitted by **January 15, 2016**

Participants are invited to submit their proposals (individual papers and panels) in an online form): <http://www.eacp2016.oc.vu.lt/>. Panel proposals should contain all the abstracts of individual papers in the given panel. Online submission opens from June 21, 2015.

**Academic areas:**

Both philosophy and Chinese civilization offer wide horizons for those who attempt to understand human condition in its universal, and also in its various particular modes. Thus, a broad range of thematic areas are expected to contribute to the goals of the conference:

- History of Chinese Thought
- Philosophy in China vs. Chinese Philosophy
- Methodological Challenges in Chinese and Comparative Philosophy
- Chinese Schools of Thought (*rujia*, *daoja*, *mojia*, *fajia*, etc.) in Contemporary China
- Chinese Buddhism: Past and Present
- Chinese Appropriation of Western Philosophy
- Western Appropriation of Chinese Philosophy
- Logic and Argument in China
- Aesthetical, Ethical, Religious Traditions in China
- Contemporary Philosophy in Chinese-speaking Academia
- Chinese Traditional Systems of Knowledge (divination, medicine, astrology, etc.)
- Political philosophy and Chinese World of Thought
- Philosophical Anthropology and Chinese World of Thought

- Philosophy of Psychology and Chinese World of Thought
- Interdisciplinary Research and Chinese Philosophy
- Chinese Philosophy as Practice
- Problems of Translation and Chinese Intellectual Tradition

**Conference description:**

China related topics are becoming more widespread in philosophy studies around the world, thus making philosophy – still largely dominated by Western traditions – less parochial and more encompassing in its undertakings. However, there is still a quite noticeable separation between English-speaking and Chinese-speaking academic communities, not only due to language barriers, but also due to differences in academic approaches, styles and modes of thought. Moreover, the so-called Western scholarship on Chinese philosophy is not exhausted by the English language publications, as a considerable part of European scholarship is conducted in national languages and remains less accessible to the wider audiences outside of the given language environment.

Looking from a different perspective, Chinese intellectual tradition is still too often seen as being relevant only to political and ethical considerations. However, the early Chinese thinkers seem to be very thoughtful on various topics that are now of great interest to scholars in cognitive sciences, ecology, healthcare, and others.

The purpose of this conference is to provide an academic framework and to invite scholars to think across the various real and imagined borders: philosophical, cultural, national, disciplinary, academic. We hope to facilitate both the critical reexamination of the existing trends in philosophical studies of China and to open up innovative methodological approaches and new possible research directions in the field.

**Young Scholar Award:**

The conference also attempts to encourage young scholars (MA holders and PhD candidates) and to facilitate their investigations in areas related to Chinese phi-

losophy and/or philosophy in China. This goal is to be met by the early integration of young scholars to the professional community. For this purpose, the Young Scholar Award is organized and one special panel is planned at the EACP conference to offer a platform and a balanced academic feedback for the youngest generation of researchers in the field of Chinese philosophy. For more information on the format and requirements of the Young Scholar Award, see:  
<http://www.eacp2016.oc.vu.lt/>.

**Keynote Speakers:**

Confirmed keynote speakers so far include:

- **Prof. Carine DEFOORT**, KU Leuven
- **Prof. PENG Guoxiang** 彭国翔, Zhejiang University

**Conference Fee:**

Conference fee is **50 EUR** for scholars and **10 EUR** for student presenters.

Conference fee will be higher when paid on site.

**Language of Communication:**

English and Mandarin Chinese

**Other important dates:**

- June 21, 2015 – January 10, 2016: Abstract submission for individual papers and panels
- February 15-17, 2016: Notification of acceptance
- February 15-May 15, 2016: Online registration for conference
- June 9 – 11, 2016: Conference

**Information:**

Information about the EACP and the inaugural conference at Vilnius University, as well as the newest updates can be found at: <http://www.eacp2016.oc.vu.lt/>

For any questions or clarifications please contact the organizers of the conference at:  
[eacp2016@oc.vu.lt](mailto:eacp2016@oc.vu.lt)

or: the chair of the organizing committee Dr. Vytis SILIUS, at:  
[vytis.silius@oc.vu.lt](mailto:vytis.silius@oc.vu.lt).

## How to become a member of EACP

If you would like to become a member of the European Association for Chinese Philosophy, please:

1. Create a **user account** at the EACP page (<http://ea-cp.eu/user/register>).
2. Complete the **application form** (You must be logged in to view the form. Please be sure to include all the required information).
3. After your membership is approved, you will be **notified** immediately.
4. The **payment** of the membership fee should be done to the EACP account according to the instructions at: <http://ea-cp.eu/members/membership-fee>.
5. You will become an **active member** after the payment of the membership fee.

Welcome!

# EACP OFFICERS

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