

Asian Association for Women Philosophers (AAWP)

**PILOSOPHIZING GENDER:WOMEN AND PATRIARCHY
IN ASIAN SOCIETY AND HISTORY (080015)**

August 15 4:10pm – 6:00pm

Room 203A, China National Convention Center

Moderator: Heisook Kim

Speakers: Jin Y. Park, Mayuko Uehara, Shiu-Ching Wu

Presentation 1

Title: "Three New Women: Their Lives and Their Deaths"

Presenter:

Jin Y. Park

Affiliation:

American University

ABSTRACT

This paper deals with three Korean "new women" (新女性) in the early twentieth century. By challenging the patriarchal tradition that controls women through body politics, the new women demanded the freedom to pursue lives of their own. This paper reflects on their lives and their deaths. As they attempted to live the lives they desired, these new women suffered social death long before bodily death. What lives did the new women dream of? How did Korean society respond? What did the social death penalty inflicted upon them signify regarding the meaning of life, death, and existence? Who has the right to say what should have meaning in existence? Who decides what is a meaningful life? This paper explores these questions and consider the social construction of meaning and

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values of our life and the mode of challenges that members of society are subject themselves to.

Presentation 2

Title:

Confucian Care Ethics Reconsidered: an Alternative Way to both
Compatibilism and Incompatibilism

Presenter:

Wu Shiu-Ching

Affiliation:

National Chung-Cheng University

ABSTRACT

Despite that care ethics and Confucian ethics are similar to each other in many respects, such as the expansion of caring at home to the ideal of the global care, compatibilists and incompatibilists have talked past to each other for the past two decades. Both approaches, to my critique, are one-sided and incomplete. After briefly and critically examining the limits of each view, the paper moves on to reconsider the conception of care with the hope to bridge the gap between compatibilism and incompatibilism.

As I argue, moral virtues, intellectual capacities as well, are enabled through circumspective master of the world, which in turn, is acquired from being good at embodying caring sense. Insofar as moral and epistemic abilities are two sides of the same source, that is, a hybrid virtue embodied within caring habitus, the values or capacities good for the pursuit of knowledge can be seen as the enhancement of those cultivated at home. In light of the hybridity of care, the alternative collaborative project has advantages in terms of ascending from the invitation of men to be like women at home, binding care and xiao through love connection, and reaching up the heaven of the ideal community.

As such, the alternative collaborative project is bottom-up position-taking, ascending from the invitation of men to be like women at home, reaching up the

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heaven of the ideal community (大同), via binding care and xiao through love connection, which, in turn, could result in being attentive to face-to-face communication that is rudimentary for the flourishing relationship. The alternative bottom-up project, as I hope, should be congenial to Rosenlee's (2013:320) prospect of expanding "the theoretical horizon of care ethics from a uni-directional personal care to a bi-directional social and political care".

Presentation 3

Title:

Inquiring into Gender Difference in the Self-Other Relation within Nishida's Inter-Subjective Philosophy

Presenter:

Mayuko Uehara

Affiliation:

Kyoto University

ABSTRACT

This presentation aims at examining the problem of the sexual difference of existence on the basis of Nishida Kitarō's (1870 - 1945) intersubjective philosophy of "I and You."

Interestingly, Nishida's niece, the philosopher Takahashi Fumi, pointed out the inequality between man and woman in Japanese society as early as the 1930's. According to Takahashi's analysis, the basic cause of discrimination in respects to households, marriage, and gender consciousness, etc. could be traced back to a perspective on gender inequality held at the level of individual personality. She asserts that the feudal-like power relationship of men and women is latently characterized by male convenience and female obsequiousness. I would like to draw attention to Takahashi's foresight in this presentation, as she recognized that there existed a attitude of 'honor men-despise women (男尊女卑) in the mental

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structure of both women and men. Of course, by comparison, today our perspective of gender equality has seemingly made remarkable progress. Yet the imbalance of work load in society and the household, along with problems of sexual harassment, have far from been resolved.

In order to argue these practical questions from the viewpoint of gender difference in existence, I will attempt to found them upon Nishida's discourse of the self-other, "I and You." Although I read this discourse as going beyond the particularities of gender, I take the approach of adopting Simone de Beauvoir's criticism of Emanuel Levinas as a principal "material" for comparative study, in order to shed new light on Nishida's "I and You." Levinas takes the standpoint of "absolute alterity" which is "realized inside femininity." However, did Beauvoir really understand the meaning of this so-called "absolute alterity"? Are equal and impartial relationships between human existences actually possible? Is there a significance in continuing to expect an equal and impartial relationship between different gendered forms of human existence? An investigation of such questions will allow us to deepen our understanding of gendered difference in the relation of self-other.