City University of Hong Kong

Department of Public Policy

Research Student Seminar

Wisdom as Meta-Virtue?: Dasan’s Understanding of Shi fei zhi xin (是非之心) and Zhi (智)

Presented at APA Pacific Division Meeting 2017 in Seattle

by

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<td>Time:</td>
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<td>Venue:</td>
<td>POL’s Multi-purpose Room (B7516), AC1 City University of Hong Kong</td>
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This talk aims to set out the possibility that shi fei zhi xin (the sprout of right and wrong) and zhi (the virtue of wisdom) in the Mengzi may not refer to an agent’s cognitive tendency or quality as distinct from other affective sprouts and virtues. I will do so by analyzing Jeong Yagyong (Dasan)’s theory of human nature as preferences. According to his view, human nature in the Mengzi refers to basic preferences such as liking the good and disliking the bad, and the four sprouts are representatives of a variety of responses of the heart-mind to its perception of situations. Shi fei zhi xin is a response of the heart-mind which perceives an object that elicits a feeling of moral approbation or disapprobation as being good or bad, and zhi is a virtue achieved only after regarding the good or bad objects perceived by shi fei zhi xin as beneficial or harmful to oneself and seeking or avoiding them. Such a view of shi fei zhi xin and zhi may offer an alternative to the intellectualist interpretation of Mengzi’s theory which regards moral behavior as only arising after judgments have been made through cognitive processes.

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(Free admission)

All are welcome!