

Wang Yangming's Political Thought of “Loving the People (親民)” : Towards Care and Coexistence



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(This talk will be held in Korean via ZOOM)

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Abstract

This seminar examines Wang Yangming's political thought on the Confucian ideal of “Loving the People” from the perspective of his idea of an organic ideal society in which the myriad things form one body. First, it shows that Wang Yangming formulated his own idea of “Loving the People” through his own life experiences: living at the periphery of the Ming society along with the common people while dedicating his whole life to the pursuit of sagehood, ultimately leading him to develop philosophical thought that centers around painfulness, caring, healing, and nurturing of the life. His philosophical thought culminated in a series of novel philosophical notions or theories, including “The heart-mind is principle” (心即理), “the unity knowing and acting” (知行合一), “fulfilling the innate knowledge of the good” (致良知), “The Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things form one body” (天地萬物一體), and “loving the people” (親民). The seminar concludes by discussing the revolutionary character of Wang’s philosophical thought—the power to unravel the foundation of the Ming Confucian society that was rigidly hierarchical, patriarchal, and authoritarian—as well as its implications for modern society.

Short Biography

Sea Jeong Kim is professor in the Department of Philosophy at Chungnam National University in South Korea. He received his Ph.D. in Confucian studies from Sungkyunkwan University with a thesis titled "A Study on Wang Yangming's Life Philosophy." He is the director of the Institute of Confucian studies at Chungnam National University and one of the co-chairs of the Daejeon Federation for Environmental Movements. He has published over sixty articles and book chapters, including *Yangming Studies: the Way of Caring and Coexistence* (2020), *The Confucian Life Philosophy of Caring and Coexistence* (2020), and *Thinking the New Confucianism of the day* (co-authored, 2020), etc. He has also published more than a hundred articles on Chinese Philosophy, Korean Philosophy and Environmental Philosophy. He currently conducts research on the study of East Asian philosophy from the perspectives of life philosophy, environmental philosophy, and caring philosophy.