

Lecture by **Dr. Fenrong Liu** - Department of Philosophy, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China

Chinese logic and philosophy: Reconstruction or integration?

Do we Chinese think differently from Western people? How different cultures influence our reasoning? If Confucius were alive, could he communicate with Plato? This lecture is an attempt to answer those questions. The talk will start with an old controversy on whether there is 'Chinese logic' or 'Chinese philosophy', a hot issue some 100 years ago, which has returned in force today. I first analyze the general background of the debate from a historical point of view, and relate it to features of Chinese society in the past and today. Then I turn to logic, and focus on the following question: do the Chinese reason differently from Western people? I will argue that we share the intellectual quest of reasoning rationally and logically, which is at the same time the core and basis for cross-cultural communication. In passing, I also show how cultural differences add some intriguing new flavours. Still, history tells us that communication across cultures has been taking place all the time. Different cultures are not static 'identities': they keep integrating, with mutual influences. The case of China and the West is no exception, but rather an illustration of this general pattern.

Fenrong Liu (<http://fenrong.net/>) is an associate professor at Tsinghua University, Beijing, one of the most prestigious universities in China. She received her first Ph.D degree in Philosophy at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 2001 on default reasoning, a topic linking philosophy with Artificial Intelligence. From 2003-2008, she worked at the Institute for Logic, Language and Computation (ILLC) at the University of Amsterdam, where she obtained a second Ph.D degree in Science on dynamic logics of preference. Most of her research is aimed at understanding the following issues. How does information change human preference and beliefs? How can we model the similarities and differences between agents, making room for agent diversity in logic? And finally, what is the best way of reading the ancient Chinese logic literature? Are we reasoning across cultures in similar ways, or differently, and if the latter, where is the borderline?

Lecture by **Prof. Dr. Rens Bod** - Institute for Logic, Language and Computation (ILLC), Universiteit van Amsterdam

Towards a World History of the Humanities: The Impact of China

While the historiography of science stems from at least the 19th century, an historical overview of the humanities formed until very recently a conspicuous gap in intellectual history. In his 2010 book "De Vergeten Wetenschappen" ("The Forgotten Sciences"), Rens Bod shows how 'humanists' from China, India, Arabic world, Africa and Europe analyzed their material (language, art, music, literature and the past) and what kind of patterns they found. In the current lecture he will focus on the development of the Chinese humanities, showing that the "analogical" method of argumentation in Chinese logic is hard to find in other humanistic practices, such as historiography (e.g. Sima Qian, Liu Zhiji), philology (Shu Xi, Gu Yanwu), art theory (Xie He, Zhu Jingxuan), music theory (Liu An, Cai Yuanding) and poetics (e.g. Liu Xie, Chen Kui, Hu Yinglin). In these disciplines there is first of all a search for (descriptive or prescriptive) rule-based systems that closely resemble developments in other regions, such as India and Europe. However, it turns out that the search for underlying principles is found in all Chinese humanities, including logic and rhetoric. We will discuss what this means for the old controversy on whether there exists a "Chinese humanistic practice".

Prof. Dr. Rens Bod (<http://staff.science.uva.nl/~rens/>) is a professor at the ILLC, University of Amsterdam, in the area of language, computation, and cognition. He is a 'profile professor' at the UvA Faculty of Humanities with a particular interest in the broader role of the Humanities. His book "De Vergeten Wetenschappen" ("The Forgotten Sciences") will come out this fall:
http://www.uitgeverijprometheus.nl/index.php?option=com_pac&view=boek_detail&isbn=9789035134850