



The Society of Christian Philosophers



Linda Zagzebski, President • Kelly James Clark, Executive Director • Fall 2006

Sino-American Symposium

The 12th Sino-American Symposium on Philosophy and Religious Studies, held on July 3-6, 2006, was originally planned for Wuhan University. Problems arose in arranging the conference, however, and in the end it was necessary to make a last-minute switch to Peking University. (In Chinese it's called "Beijing Daxue," or "Beida" for short, but in English it's still called by the old name.) The Beijing organizers did an excellent job of putting the conference together on very short notice, and the whole meeting ran very smoothly.

Most of the American participants arrived in Beijing early to take part in some pre-conference sightseeing, during which we were accompanied by some Chinese students. These days gave the American participants a great opportunity to get to know one another. Over the first two days we saw Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City, some of Beijing's famous old hutong ("alley") neighborhoods, some markets (bargaining required!), the Temple of Heaven, and a spectacular performance of Beijing acrobats. On the third day, we took a long bus ride to the Great Wall at Mutianyu. The Great Wall needs no description, but it's worth saying that even though I'd been hearing about it all my life, it was still very impressive. Over the objections of our tour guide, who seemed worried about our stamina, we hiked up the mountainside. Again over his objections, we rode down on little luge-like contraptions. That evening we finally went on to our real destination, Beida. There we stayed in a university hotel and took most of our meals in the university's many restaurants. The Beida campus is very impressive—it's got many nice buildings and a land-



From left: Eleonore Stump, Donald Stump, Michael Beaty, Daniel Beaty, Mike Rota, Michael Degnan, and Christina Van Dyke

scaped park with a lake in the middle.

The conference opened the next day with a visit to the New Summer Palace and Fragrant Mountain Park, where we had ample opportunity to engage in discussions with many Chinese conference participants. I wondered whether these discussions would be scripted and uncomfortable, but in fact they were quite open and friendly. That evening we took part in a graduate student colloquium which gave us insights into some of the research on Western philosophy that's taking place in China now.

The main part of the conference began on July 4. The program featured nine American and fourteen Chinese professors; eleven graduate students (ten of them Chinese) were also registered for the conference, and most of the sessions had additional participants of various sorts. The conference theme was Thomas Aquinas. Some of the papers were directly on Thomas's views on metaphysics, philosophy of religion,

ethics, human nature, and other subjects. Other papers investigated the views some of Thomas's predecessors or successors. Still others gave an account of Thomistic scholarship in China or compared Thomas to Chinese philosophers.

All the papers had been distributed in English and Chinese versions ahead of time, and all the oral presentations—not only of the main papers, but also of the commentaries—were given in English. What was said in English but hadn't been distributed in Chinese ahead of time was then translated on the fly into Chinese. Translation problems did not arise very often, and those that did were quickly overcome. For me, some of the most fascinating moments involved watching the Chinese scholars debate among themselves in Chinese over how to translate a certain English word. It was fascinating because while I couldn't follow the conversation in the least, I knew just what sort of conversation they were happening; this allowed me to see the cross-cultural reality of rational

Sino-American Symposium ~ continued from cover

inquiry while simultaneously feeling the barriers that can make it difficult.

Like any conference, this one was memorable not just for the interesting presentations and the discussions that followed, but also for the informal conversations that went on during tea (!) breaks, shared meals, and excursions. These conversations often addressed serious topics that allowed the participants from both sides to learn more about one another's world-views.

Overall, the conference was a great success: it ran smoothly and participants on both sides made new friends and learned a lot. The big question for many of us now is: when do we get to go back?

Michael Gorman

The Catholic University of America

For a short time this summer, I left the comparatively sleepy city of St. Paul, Minnesota to travel to the bustling metropolis of Beijing, China. The occasion for this opportunity was the Twelfth Sino-American Symposium on Philosophy and Religious Studies, organized by the Department of Philosophy at Peking University, the Institute of Foreign Philosophy at Peking University, and the Society of Christian Philosophers.

Held from July 3-6, the symposium brought philosophy professors from the U.S. together with philosophy professors and students from some of the best universities in China. The Chinese faculty participants included: Cheng Lian (Peking University), Duan Dezhi (Professor and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at Wuhan University), Jing Xiping (Peking), Kwan Kai Man (Hong Kong Baptist), Benedict Hung-Biu Kwok (Alliance Bible Seminary, Hong Kong), Liu Su-Min (Huaqiao and Peking), Sang Jing-Yu (Wuhan), Wang Xinheng (Fudan), Wang Lu (Tsinghua), Wu Fei (Peking), Xu Tao (Wuhan), Xu Xiangdong (Peking), Zhang Zihgang (Peking), and Zhao Dunhua (Professor and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at Peking University). The American



A tub of Buddha heads.

faculty participants were Michael Beaty (Baylor), David Bradshaw (University of Kentucky), David Burrell (Notre Dame), Kelly James Clark (Calvin), Michael Gorman (Catholic University of America), Eleonore Stump (Saint Louis University), Christina van Dyke (Calvin), Arvin Vos (Western Kentucky), and myself (University of St. Thomas). Graduate student participants included Cai Zheng (Peking), Li Minghe (Wuhan), Li Qilin (Peking), Shao Zegang (Tsinghua), Charles Tyler (Notre Dame), Wang Cheng-Jun (Wuhan), Zhai Yi-Tian (Fudan), and Zhou Li-Xuan (Peking). Prior to the start of the conference itself, I had the chance to hike along the Great Wall, to tour the Summer Palace outside of Beijing, and to sample exotic Chinese cuisine—all of these experiences contributed to my sense of being a stranger in a far-away land. But when the conference started, I found myself once again in a familiar world, the thought-world of philosophy. At one point during the conference, Eleonore Stump observed that, in his paper, the Chinese professor Xu Tao was engaging the thoughts of a Western European (Aquinas), who was himself responding to an Islamic philosopher

(Averroes), who was himself interacting with the thoughts of an ancient Greek thinker (Aristotle). Philosophers themselves are from particular times and places, but their ideas can transcend time and place, forming a common heritage for people everywhere.

The focus of this year's symposium was on medieval philosophy, and, more specifically, on the thought of Thomas Aquinas. In the past 25 years or so, there has been an increase of interest in Aquinas among Chinese academics. At Beijing University, Zhao Dunhua has done major research on medieval philosophy, including the thought of Aquinas. At Wuhan University, Duan Dezhi and his colleagues have recently set up a center devoted to studying Western religious thought. Professor Duan and several of the other professors at Wuhan are currently translating the entire *Summa theologiae* into Chinese, and are already two-thirds of the way through. (The *De ente et essentia* has also been translated.) There is also a Center for the Study of Aquinas and Medievalism at Huaqiao University, where Dr. Liu Su-Min and her colleagues are conducting research in those areas.

According to Liu Su-Min, issues of translation present one of the major obstacles to the study of Aquinas's thought in China. The rendering into Chinese of precise philosophical concepts from Scholasticism can pose great difficulty. As Dr. Liu explains, "Since there exists a long philosophical tradition in Chinese culture, the characters that are put together to express a Scholastic concept may have quite a different connotation in Chinese." Although difficulties such as these are present, the Chinese scholars are clearly up to the task. I found myself very impressed by their intellectual achievements and am confident that their work will bear much fruit. I look forward to more mutually beneficial exchanges between Chinese and American philosophers in the future.

Michael Rota

University of St. Thomas

Presidential Candidates

This year we are starting the election of our new President a bit earlier. This will provide some overlap between outgoing and incoming Presidents. Our two candidates are William Hasker and William Wainwright.

William Hasker

(Ph.D., University of Edinburgh), is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Huntington College in Huntington, Indiana, where he taught from 1966 until 2000. His main interests in philosophy are philosophy of religion and philosophy of mind. He is the author of *Metaphysics: Constructing a Worldview* (InterVarsity 1983), *God, Time, and Knowledge* (Cornell 1989), *The Emergent Self* (Cornell 1999), and



Providence, Evil, and the Openness of God (Routledge 2004), and is co-author or co-editor of several other volumes. He has authored articles in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, the *Supplement to the Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, and the *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, as well as numerous journal articles. He is currently the editor of *Faith and Philosophy*; he will be retiring from that position in the summer of 2007.

William J. Wainwright received his Ph.D from the University of Michigan in 1961. He has taught at Dartmouth College, the University of Illinois-Urbana, and is currently Distinguished Professor of Philosophy



Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Recent publications include *Reason and the Heart* (Cornell), *God, Philosophy and Academic Culture* (Oxford), *Philosophy of Religion*, 2d. ed. (Wadsworth), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford), and *Religion and Morality* (Ashgate). Bill was a member of the Steering Committee of the Philosophy of Religion Section of the American Academy of Religion from 1984 to 2002, and served as President of the Society for Philosophy of Religion in 2005. He has also served on several subcommittees of the Society of Christian Philosophers over the years, and twice (1984-1987 and 1992-1995) as a member of its Executive Committee. Bill was the Editor of *Faith and Philosophy* from 1995 to 2000, and continues to be an active participant on its Board of Editorial Consultants.

Executive Committee Meeting

The Executive Committee met on April 28, 2006 in Chicago. The following items are those on which the committee acted:

1. The Executive committee approved a proposal to divide the existing office of Secretary-Treasurer into two offices: (1) an office of Executive Director, and (2) an office of Treasurer. In addition, the Executive Committee proposed to the membership to elect Kelly Clark to the position of Executive Director, and Lee Hardy to the position of Treasurer. Each of them would have a three-year term, the same as the term of office of Secretary-Treasurer as currently specified in the Constitution. This proposal requires the approval of the membership.
2. It was approved that members of the Editorial Board of *Faith and Philosophy* serve five-year terms. The editor will begin implementing this policy.

3. A template was approved for Regional Meeting Reports. This template can be downloaded from SCP's website. Regional reports are due to the President by March 1.
4. The proposal to create a Middle East Outreach committee passed.
5. The Proposal to create a Committee on Committees passed. This committee will advise the President of candidates for committees.

The next Executive Committee meeting will be Friday, April 20, 2007 in conjunction with the APA Central Divisional Meetings. If you should have any new business, please send it to President Linda Zagzebski.

Election results

The proposal to separate the office of Secretary-Treasurer into Executive Director and Treasurer passed. Kelly James Clark was elected Executive Director and Lee Hardy was elected Treasurer. The newly elected members of the SCP Executive Committee are Steve Davis, John Hare, Frances Howard-Snyder, and Tom Senior. Outgoing members are Laura Garcia, Robert Koons, Bob Roberts, and Jim Taylor. We thank them for their service.

Please cut out and mail your ballot by March 1, 2007 to: Society of Christian Philosophers, Department of Philosophy, Calvin College, 1845 Knollcrest Circle SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546-4402 or email kruido@calvin.edu.

Presidential Election Ballot

Vote for one: William Hasker
 William Wainwright



Kretzmann Library

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I wish you could see how excited and how glad the faculty and students at Wuhan are over all those books which you have so generously donated to them. The books have flowed in from everywhere and made their way (sooner or later) to Wuhan. Some of you gave a few books; some of you gave a lot of books. But very many people contributed to what is now the nucleus of an excellent small library in Western philosophy and theology at Wuhan. Books are very expensive in China, and so this small beginning of a library, donated by strangers from so far away, has created something of a stir in the community. The local media has run more than one story on it, and the University itself has provided new accommodations for the whole Philosophy Department together with a beautiful new room for the

library. The Chinese will catalogue these books in the coming months, and they will try to put the catalogue on-line, so that scholars throughout China will be aware of this resource at Wuhan. Little as our donated library is, faculty at Wuhan University tell me that it is one of the largest collections of such materials in China.

I would be so glad if you would not forget this burgeoning library in the coming year. By comparison with what we take for granted in our libraries, it is so small. As you find yourself in possession of extra books, or as you find yourself willing to share books which are not extra for you, if you mail them to me, I will get them to Wuhan. Information for getting the books to China may be found at <http://www.siu.edu/~scp/kretzmannlib.htm>.



For my part, I am very grateful to each of you who has contributed to the library as it now is in Wuhan. This library is a living thing, which will do good in China long after much else that we do has fallen into dust. This is our library, as well as Wuhan's.

With much thanks,
Eleonore Stump

Regional Conferences

Eastern Regional Meeting

April 20–21, 2007

Columbia International University
Columbia, South Carolina

Options and Issues in Christian Ethics

Papers are invited on various theories in Christian ethics today. The conference will feature the following keynote addresses: “The Idea of a Regulative Virtues Epistemology” by Robert C. Roberts, “Objections to Divine Command Theories of Moral

Obligation” by C. Steven Evans, and “God and Nature in the Explanation of Moral Norms” by Mark Murphy.

Midwest Regional Meeting

March 22–24, 2007

University of Dubuque
Dubuque, IA

Developing Character: Moral and Intellectual Virtues

Plenary Speakers: Linda Zagzebski, Janine Idziak, and Paul Reasoner

Western Regional Meeting

February 22–24, 2007

Azusa Pacific University
Theology and Ontology

Plenary Speakers: Michael Rea, Robert Koons, and Timothy O'Connor
Plenary Respondent: Ted Sider

For complete conference details, including paper submission information, see <http://www.siu.edu/~scp/scpconferences.htm>.

Society of Christian Philosophers

Kelly James Clark, Executive Director
Department of Philosophy
Calvin College
1845 Knollcrest Circle SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546-4402

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