

# Experience Day Philosophy: Global and Comparative Perspectives

## 22 November 2024



Universiteit  
Leiden  
The Netherlands

### Introduction

A student of Philosophy: Global and Comparative Perspectives will tell you about your first year at this programme.

### Lecture

#### **Title**

The Person is not a Self: Personhood in Indian Buddhist Metaphysics

#### **Short description**

The talk discusses early Buddhist views about what a person is, and their arguments that persons are not enduring unified selves (*ātman*). It introduces the Buddhist idea of persons as causally connected collections of impermanent physical and mental events. Finally, it considers the relation between these claims and the Buddhist commitment to ending suffering (*duḥkha*).

**Lecturer:** Dr. Stephen Harris ([s.e.harris@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:s.e.harris@hum.leidenuniv.nl))

Stephen Harris is Assistant Professor (Universitair Docent) at Leiden University, where he teaches in the Institute for Philosophy and the International B.A. program. He has also taught philosophy at the University of New Mexico and the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. He specializes in Cross-Cultural and Indian philosophy, with a particular interest in Buddhist ethical texts.

### Seminar

#### **Title**

The Taste of Confucianism and Daoism

#### **Short description**

In this class, students collaboratively read well-known texts from the Confucian and Daoist traditions and share their perspectives.

**Lecturer:** Dr. Dobin Choi ([d.choi@phil.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:d.choi@phil.leidenuniv.nl))

Dobin Choi is a University Lecturer Korean and Comparative Philosophy at Leiden University in the Netherlands. Before joining Leiden in 2023, he taught philosophy at various universities in the United States and Korea, including the University of Iowa and Seoul National University. His research focuses on comparative studies of the ethics and aesthetics of Confucianism and British Moralists.

### Q&A

Do you have any questions regarding the programme? The student will answer them all at the Q&A.

## **Preparation**

The homework for the seminar is attached down below.

- Dobin Choi, [d.choi@phil.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:d.choi@phil.leidenuniv.nl)
- Dobin Choi is a University Lecturer Korean and Comparative Philosophy at Leiden University in the Netherlands. Before joining Leiden in 2023, he taught philosophy at various universities in the United States and Korea, including the University of Iowa and Seoul National University. His research focuses on comparative studies of the ethics and aesthetics of Confucianism and British Moralists.
- Title of lecture(s): The Taste of Confucianism and Daoism
- Brief description of the content of the lecture:
  - In this class, students collaboratively read well-known texts from the Confucian and Daoist traditions and share their perspectives.
- Homework assignment for the seminar in word/pdf/video of a maximum of 2 hours of preparation time. NB: royalty free so it can be published on the website: BELOW



- **The *Daodejing*** (道德經) (*Laozi* 6th century BCE)

1. 道可道，非常道。名可名，非常名。無名天地之始；有名萬物之母。故常無欲，以觀其妙；常有欲，以觀其徼。此兩者，同出而異名，同謂之玄。玄之又玄，衆妙之門。

The Dao that can be spoken is not the enduring and unchanging Dao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name. Having no name, it is the Originator of heaven and earth; having a name, it is the Mother of all things.

Always without desire we must be found, If its deep mystery we would sound; But if desire always within us be, Its outer fringe is all that we shall see.

Under these two aspects, it is really the same; but as development takes place, it receives the different names. Together we call them the Mystery. Where the Mystery is the deepest is the gate of all that is subtle and wonderful.

- What do you think about the distinction between the “nameless” and the “named”? Why do you think that they are collectively called the Mystery?

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- ***Zhuangzi* Ch.3.** How to nurture life.

Cook Ding was carving an ox carcass for Lord Wenhui. With each touch of his hand, heave of his shoulder, step of his feet, thrust of his knee – whop! whish! – he wielded his knife with a whoosh, and every move was in rhythm. It was as though he were performing the Dance of the Mulberry Grove or keeping to the beat of the Constant Source music.

“Ah, marvelous!” said Lord Wenhui. “Surely this is the acme of skill!”

Cook Ding laid down his knife and replied, “What your servant loves, my lord, is the Dao, and that is a step beyond skill.

“At the beginning, when I first began carving up oxen, all I could see was the whole carcass. After three years I could no longer see the carcass whole, and now I meet it with my spirit and don’t look with my eyes. Perception and understanding cease and spirit moves as it will. I follow the natural form: slicing the major joints I guide the knife through the big hollows, and by conforming to the inherent contours, no vessels or tendons or tangles of sinews – much less the big bones – block my blade in the least.

