

# ETHICS AND SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

Volume 27

June 2021

### In This Issue

#### Activities Review

- \* The Fourteenth Symposium on “Bioethics from Chinese Philosophical / Religious Perspectives” 2
- \* Public Lecture on “Chinese and Cross-Cultural Health Humanities Lecture Series: Why is this Pandemic Unprecedented?” 12
- \* Public Lecture on “COVID-19 Vaccine: Hopes, Hypes and Fairness” 13

#### Centre Update

- \* New Research Fellows 14

#### Recent Publications

- \* *International Journal of Chinese and Comparative Philosophy of Medicine* 16

#### Upcoming Event

- \* The Fifteenth Symposium on “Bioethics from Chinese Philosophical / Religious Perspectives” 18



## The Fourteenth Symposium on "Bioethics from Chinese Philosophical / Religious Perspectives"

Launched in 2007, this research symposium aims to nurture young researchers from mainland China under our supervision and to provide research leadership in the field. The fourteenth symposium was held via ZOOM on October 31, 2020 with over 120 participants, at which 8 scholars and practitioners from various mainland universities, research institution and hospital gave their presentations. Our Centre's fellows commented on each paper. Over the years, the symposium has fostered interdisciplinary research on Chinese intellectual traditions and contemporary bioethics issues and facilitated the further development of Chinese bioethics.

Selected papers were revised and published in the *International Journal of Chinese and Comparative Philosophy of Medicine*, Vol.18 Nos. 1 and 2.

**14<sup>th</sup> CONFERENCE ON CONSTRUCTING BIOETHICS IN CHINA**

主办单位：东南大学医学人文系 / 香港浸会大学应用伦理学研究中心  
协办单位：《医学与哲学》杂志社，《中国医学伦理学》杂志社

**第十四届 建构中国生命伦理学研讨会**

建构道教器官捐赠现代教义诠释  
香港大学附属医学院 余定怪

伦理决策视域下的死亡尊严探析  
湖北医药学院 马菊华

儒家家庭主义文化背景下医疗决策的自主问题  
东南大学 王乐

基于Citespace V的中国30年临终关怀研究计量分析  
深圳大学 唐咏 罗鹏

新型冠状病毒肺炎临床研究的利益冲突管理  
陆军军医大学第二附属医院 周银吉

新冠肺炎期间隐私保护的思索  
武汉科技大学 孙君恒

人工智能在医疗护理应用中的伦理问题探析  
南京师范大学 史文娟

人工智能养老的伦理考量  
大连理工大学 赵岩

会议时间：2020年10月31日  
09:00-17:00

腾讯会议：994 395 268  
会议密码：1031

### **Epidemic Areas, Masks, and the Asymptomatic— How Covid-19 has Hurt our Public Life**

*Cheng Guobin,  
Southeast University, China*

The huge, diffuse, and uncertain threat brought about by the Covid-19 epidemic has blurred familiar and trusted relationships and the boundaries of public life. Under such circumstances, what people need most is to uncover the “enemy” and regain certainty in interpersonal relations and the public sphere. Before the popularization of accurate and efficient scientific detection methods, people used simple labeling methods to tell concepts apart. Labeling epidemic areas protects the status quo by demarcating cleanliness from pollution, but in finding the enemy, doing so may cause accidental injury to the innocent. Labeling masks allows distinctions in the crowd so that group boundaries and senses of belonging can be found in chaos. However, such labeling may lead to

the creation of enemies. The fundamental goal of these methods is self-protection. Nevertheless, in addition to such considerations, individuals have a wider moral obligation to others and to public life. Only by choosing to adhere to our moral obligations under the enormous pressure of a survival crisis can we find true hope to defeat the epidemic. Contemporary public life is a symbiotic community that is closely related, in close communication, and mutually enmeshed. Such a community is very fragile, and it can easily slip into divisiveness and become isolated under huge security pressures. The Covid-19 epidemic is not only a serious challenge, but also an important exercise. We need to learn enough to prepare for greater crisis that may arise in the future.

### **The Dao of Benevolence in the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Revelation from Cultural and Ethical Perspectives**

*Lee Shui Chuen,  
National Central University, Taiwan*

The special properties of the new Covid-19 virus make it difficult to control, and it very quickly became a pandemic. The numbers of infected and deaths have increased so fast that it has incited a global panic and caused serious worldwide psychological, day-to-day, and cultural problems. This paper adopts a Confucian perspective to analyze the problems of living with the virus and to explore how to adapt our values and way of living to mitigate or eliminate personal and social traumatic experiences during this serious time. In this paper, I point out that as we live in a close-knit global village, we need an effective policy to keep the pandemic at bay before we can remove inter-city and international barriers to the production of materials and the flow of economic products. Otherwise, we may—and in fact have had—continuous repeated infections. People must develop global solidarity based on interpersonal and intersocial love to share our responsibilities and burdens, and to help ourselves as well as others in this terrifying pandemic.

Public health pandemic prevention is a job involving a moral dilemma between personal rights and public safety. Because our preventative actions involve the lives of others, we must abandon prioritizing our personal rights and adopt the principles of benevolence and empathy toward others, taking our common

responsibility and care toward others as our main basis of action. This principle also applies to us: benevolence needs to be extended from our family members to everyone else. We have to put precautionary principles into action in our prevention, publicity, transparency, and accountability efforts to overcome the pandemic.

Family members are essential, as they provide both physical and emotional support during the pandemic. Society and governments have to provide the means to live as well as medical support, and political interference must be curbed so that medical professionals can take the lead on public interactions, education, and interviews to enable individuals, families, and society to build a consensus on the issues and policies of prevention. Our common enemy is the virus, which assaults human health indiscriminately. We need to help our people as well as those in other countries, especially society’s most vulnerable. We must learn from this calamity and build a platform to share information, establish norms regulating virus studies, enact rigorous regulations for safety in virus research laboratories, and reject using research results for chemical warfare. We hope this pandemic can bring about world peace as we learn to better our lives and further our ethical and cultural values.

## Moral Dilemma and Outlet for Treating Asymptomatic Infected Persons against the Background of the Epidemic

*Zhang Yanliang,  
Lanzhou University, China*

In this article, the author outlines the moral dilemma and moral outlet of treating asymptomatic infected persons against the background of the epidemic. The author first introduces the background of the research on this problem and then provides a factual description of asymptomatic infected persons and

the measures taken for the asymptomatic infected persons. Then, the author analyzes the moral dilemmas that may arise from the measures taken to treat asymptomatic infected persons. Finally, the author explores how to resolve the moral dilemma of treating asymptomatic infected persons.

## The Principle of “Informed Consent” during the COVID-19 Pandemic

*Ellen Y. Zhang,  
Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong*

This paper addresses the question of informed consent during the COVID-19 pandemic. Informed consent is “the process in which a competent individual authorizes a course of action based on sufficient relevant information, without coercion or undue inducement” (WHO, 2016). However, informed consent based on disclosure, capacity, and voluntariness has been seriously challenged during the public health crisis we are facing today. How should we resolve the ethical conflict between individual autonomy and individual rights and public health and public good? How should we attain social consensus through “the minimum grammar” of

common morality? In this paper, I first introduce the WHO’s “Guidance for Managing Ethical Issues in Infectious Disease Outbreaks” (2016) and its seven basic principles: justice, beneficence, utility, respect for persons, liberty, reciprocity, and solidarity. I then explain how those principles could face challenges in implementation during the pandemic, as there will always be tensions between individual rights, state interference, and health paternalism. Finally, I explore from a Confucian perspective the possibility of seeking the “middle point” between paternalism and individual autonomy, and between civil liberties and public health.

## A Preliminary Philosophical Investigation into Moral Issues of the COVID-19 Pandemic

*Benedict S. B. Chan,  
Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong*

At least two moral issues of some public health policies have become significant in the COVID-19 pandemic. First, it is arguable that some policies to address the present pandemic conflict with individual freedom. This is a typical moral debate between public good and individual freedom, but the COVID-19 pandemic has made this conflict a more immediate and urgent concern. Second, the world had serious inequality problems prior to the pandemic, and some of the new public health policies have caused more severe social inequalities. Instead of providing definitive answers to these two moral issues, this paper focuses on what types of moral reasoning and foundation should be used in the interdisciplinary debates

around these problems. Several ideas are discussed in detail. First, the author argues that the idea of moral human rights to health is not a sufficient moral foundation to solve these problems. Second, the author argues that in addition to the right talk, we should use Amartya Sen’s consequential evaluation and the capability approach as the foundation and moral reasoning. Third, the author argues that these two ideas from Sen can connect different moral traditions with public health issues. The author uses Confucianism as an example of a moral tradition, and argues for possible directions to address the moral issues using ideas and values from consequential evaluation, the capability approach, and Confucianism.

## How to Balance Governance Efficiency and Privacy Protection? A Textual Analysis of the Privacy Policies of the COVID-19 Contact-Tracing App in China and Singapore

*Xiong Bian and Lin Fen,  
City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong*

The COVID-19 pandemic has spawned the spread of contact-tracing applications such as China's "Health Code" and Singapore's "TraceTogether." Balancing efficiency and privacy ethics in data governance has become a common problem faced by all countries using digital tracing tools to control the pandemic. The laws of both China and Singapore stipulate that prior to collecting personal information, organizations and institutions must clearly inform individuals about the types of personal information collected and the rules for the use of personal information, and must obtain authorized user consent. This article analyzes the privacy policies of Health Code in China and TraceTogether in Singapore and identifies five potential problems in Health Code's privacy policies: the broad collection

of personal information, multiple processing purposes, indeterminate storage time, ambiguous privacy policy content, and the ineffectiveness of informed consent, although Health Code has been deemed an efficient tool to fight against the pandemic. Singapore's TraceTogether adheres to the principles of minimum information collection, limited information processing purposes, minimum duration of information storage, openness and transparency of privacy policies, and informed consent. These two models for using big data in the fight against the pandemic in China and Singapore suggest that data governance needs to reconcile public interests and individual rights, and should balance governance efficiency and data ethics.

## The Coronavirus also Attacks Political and Corporate Bodies

*Hans-Martin Sass,  
Ruhr University Bochum, Germany; Georgetown University, USA; Renmin University  
and Peking Union College, China*

*La Peste* (1947) by Albert Camus relates the story of a cholera plague that not only killed people in a town but also devastated the town's political and business bodies. How is the COVID-19 pandemic harming not only us, our friends, and our families, but also the integrated interactions of our bodies with technologies, corporations, cultures, and politics? How will we get water, food, and information if we have no electricity, due to either the COVID-19 disaster or immoral people? How will we find new solid forms of living together in health, peace, and liberty? I pose the following five questions.

(1) Will better "domestic circulation" and "gross happiness products" offer new opportunities for stable and healthy political bodies? (2) Will the Belt-and-Road Initiative have healthy solutions for all bodies involved? (3) Will smaller political and corporate bodies be more robust and healthier, and how can we grow them? (4) Will artificial intelligence build strong organs in future political bodies, or will they disintegrate and destroy them? (5) Will integrated bioethics and biopolitics find other solutions?

## Reading Sass: Outlook of the Post-Pandemic Human Society and Its Re-Making

*Au Kit-sing Derrick,  
CUHK Centre for Bioethics, Hong Kong*

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a heavy toll on human life and thrown societies across the world into disarray. This article provides a brief reading of and commentary on the article “The coronavirus also attacks political and corporate bodies” by Prof. Hans-Martin Sass. Sass, with his deep concern about the future of human society, assumes a higher vantage point than particular sociopolitical issues to discuss the more fundamental question of interconnectedness in human societies. The pandemic is only one

of many potential serious threats to social and political institutions. COVID-19 has hit the world at a time of fragmentation, localism, and disarray. Sass raises substantial questions about what the world in general, and China in particular, may need to consider to ensure the success of rebuilding. Paradoxically, some authors suggest that the pandemic may be an opportunity for sociopolitical reconciliation and sustainable human development in the post-pandemic era.

## Reflection on the Fragility of Modern Civilization: A Response to Professor Sass

*Kwan Kai Man,  
Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong*

In my response to Prof. Sass, I first elaborate some points on which we agree. For example, I find the five crises of modern civilization discussed by Prof. Sass to be quite real, and I believe that this points to the fragility of modern civilization. I then critique the Enlightenment ideology of progress and argue that we need to prepare for the possibility of a cultural decline. I also agree with Prof. Sass’s emphasis on both the human potential for creativity and the human capacity for self-destruction. This contradicts liberal optimism about human nature and raises questions about our internal and spiritual

resources. I support Prof. Sass’s critique of modern society’s obsession with GNP (Gross National Product) and agree that the concept of a GHP (Gross Happiness Product) is a better criterion for a good society. However, I believe that we must overcome even the vestiges of hedonism by affirming the intrinsic value of an objective moral order that transcends human happiness. In the end, in the face of the possibilities of disasters and the collapse of modern civilization, we need to return to our basic communities, such as family, and emphasize the cultivation of virtue.

## An Analysis of the Human Community with a Shared Future in the Context of COVID-19

*Liu Junxiang, Yue Qiang and Ma Xiaomu,  
Chinese Academy of Medical Science and Peking Union Medical College, China*

The COVID-19 pandemic requires people and political bodies to reflect on the abundant and complicated relationships between human beings, governments, and organizations. We hold that Prof. Sass emphasizes the urgency and necessity of the view that “life is interconnected.” With the continuous progress of globalization, mankind has become an interdependent community with a shared future. However, global cooperation and communication face numerous challenges due to the diversity of cultures, national conditions, and competing interests. The COVID-19 pandemic

has driven individuals and political bodies to discuss effective measures and control the disaster together, which demands that a basic consensus be reached on how to manage the tension between individual freedom and interests and public health and well-being. Even more importantly, the pursuit of happiness is the common goal of mankind. Solidarity and mutual aid are required to create a stable, harmonious, healthy, and orderly community. Chinese traditional philosophy can contribute some wisdom and strategies to build similar but not identical bodies and societies.

## **A Human Community of Shared Future: A Response to Professor Sass**

*Wang Yu and Yin Mei,  
Harbin Medical University, China*

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed every single person and every political and corporate body. Even now, the pandemic remains severe in many countries. Every day, more lives are lost to the disease, which has destroyed countless families. Every member of the human family, every being in this world, is a tree on the same mountain and a wave on the same sea. Any political body, regardless of its form and size, has the same individual biological attributes as the people it comprises. It seeks to preserve its life, further its interests, and avoid harm, fighting, and

even war. The activities of a state or social group, like those of an individual, are ultimately directed toward survival. However, achieving this purpose requires greater cooperation for a group and state than for an individual. Thus, various crises may be resolved by breaking down the barriers of “meritocracy”; rejecting any form of narrow localism, even a kind of dogmatic geographic patriotism; discarding groundless accusations and suspicion; and allowing all of mankind to breathe the same air and share the same fate.

## **The Happiness of Collective Bodies and Individual Bodies in Modern Times**

*Tao Tao,  
Nanjing Normal University, China*

Based on analogical argument, Professor Hans-Martin Sass argues that collective and individual bodies are not independent but interconnected as natural bodies. He worries about modern scientific technologies that aggravate the diseases of the body. I agree with Prof. Sass in many respects

but emphasize that modern technology is not the key to the problem. Whether in ancient times or modern times, we have to restate that the ultimate end of life is happiness rather than benefit and that the instrument to pursue happiness is virtue rather than any kind of technology.

## **Potential and Actual Changes of Social Activity and of the Concept of Embodiment in the Age of Digitalization**

*Wu Xiaoxi,  
Southeast University, China*

Professor Hans-Martin Sass highlights an important aspect of the COVID-19 situation: the virus not only hurts people, but also attacks political and corporate bodies. He argues primarily on the level of basic ontology, revolving around two claims: first, that life is interconnected, and second, that long-lasting political and corporate bodies, despite their similarities to natural organisms, are more receptive to transformation and modification. In my comments, I further explore the implications of the second claim

against the background of COVID-19. I focus on the concept of embodiment and show that the way embodiment figures in our interactions with others and in our experience of the world changes as more and more online social activities are organized. Most importantly, I reflect on the very meaning of embodiment in the age of high biotechnology and artificial intelligence, namely how the concept might be enlarged and/or transformed.

## Confucian Ethical Reflections on the Nation's Fight against COVID-19 in Mainland China: A Tentative Response to Prof. Hans-Martin Sass's Article

*Wu Jingxian,  
Xi'an Jiaotong University, China*

As a tentative reply to Prof. Hans-Martin Sass's article entitled "The Coronavirus also Attacks Political and Corporate Bodies," this article elaborates on mainland China's national collective fight against COVID-19 with respect to Confucian familism. I apply the ethical principles of Confucian familism at the family, country, and

international levels to morally evaluate the whole nation's fight against the pandemic. My discussion supports Prof. Sass's arguments that "life is interconnected" and that "modern societies are symbiotic, complex, and adoptable living beings of natural persons."

## Combating the Coronavirus Pandemic: An Appeal to Confucian Ethical Resources

*Ruiping Fan,  
City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong*

Why have some countries done better than others in dealing with the coronavirus crisis so far? One popular answer is in terms of politics: everything depends on state capacity, the level of political trust in society, and the quality of leadership. This paper suggests the need to go beyond politics and turn to ethics. If one does not delve into the ethical spirit and substance that underlie tangible political decisions and activities to combat the coronavirus pandemic in a state, one will fail to see the cultural momentum of the people's responses in that state and miss the moral foundation of the social practices embedded within that state's civilization in comparison with other civilizations. In particular, this paper argues that the spirit and substance of Chinese ethics differ from those of the contemporary mainstream Western ethics characteristic of secular principlism, which, although they possess important advantages and merits, suffer from a series of defects and failures, including untenable reductionism, a type of dogmatism, and even radicalism. In contrast, Confucian civilization provides the Chinese with a virtue ethics that is not principlism. It is rather an

exposition of Confucian virtue (de), as a powerful but peaceful moral force, that is entrenched within the fundamental structures of the universe (as portrayed in the images of yin-yang, the eight trigrams, and the 64 hexagrams in the Classic of Change) and within the ritual activities of human beings (as described in the ceremonial and minute rituals in the three Confucian ritual classics) to shape the Confucian moral character. Confucian virtue principles and rules are implicit in such structures and the rituals to be formulated in connection with them, but they cannot be created through pure reason. They play their roles in human practices along with structures and rituals but can never exhaust their richness and profundity. The paper indicates that this virtue ethics contains a Confucian notion of harmonious freedom (that can counter scientific determinism) and a familist ethic (that can be adopted to check and balance runaway contractualism), which can be fruitfully used to direct political decisions and activities to combat the coronavirus pandemic and to accomplish peaceful and fruitful outcomes in society.



## The Role of Ethical Values in Fighting the COVID: A Reply to Ruiping Fan

*Li Chenyang,  
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore*

While largely agreeing with Ruiping Fan, Chenyang Li makes three points regarding the handling of COVID-19. First, in addition to state capacity, social trust, and leadership, as identified by Francis Fukuyama, factors responsible for successful pandemic responses include the value of individual freedom upheld by citizens. A high level of individual freedom can make it difficult to implement strict measures even when they

are objectively necessary. Second, a strong state can be effective in handling a pandemic, but without checks and balances it also runs the risk of leading a country into a major catastrophe. Third, Confucian ethics and other ethics can aid in coping with the pandemic. However, their efficacy is not unlimited, and ultimately, human survival overrides other concerns.

## Descriptive or Normative, Political or Ethical? —— Some Reflections on the Challenges of the Pandemic

*Bai Tongdong,  
Fudan University, China*

In response to Ruiping Fan's paper, I argue that his attribution of the relative success of East Asian states in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic to Confucian culture is problematic in many respects. Some of his normative discussions based on Confucianism are too "thick" to be universal. His defense of the significance of ethics in the age of science, especially the appeal to the concept

of synchronicity, and the use of filial piety to reject herd immunity are questionable. I argue that a Confucian hybrid regime that embraces liberalism and combines democratic elements with meritocratic elements may lead to better decision-making and that the Confucian's New World System is a better alternative to globalization led by nation-states.

## Five Relationships and Contract

*Fang Xudong,  
East China Normal University, China*

Professor Fan Ruiping proposed that in the Confucian view, the basis of the family relationship is family affection rather than a contract. This judgment of the Confucian family view is based on a comparative perspective on civilization. However, not only husband and wife, but also

monarch and minister, were established on the basis of the contract. Although Confucianism lacks the strong utilitarian intention of Western utilitarians, it is not without the contractual consciousness of equality and mutual benefit.

## **The Differences and Similarities between Confucian Ethics and Modern Western Ethics: A Response to Professor Ruiping Fan**

*Wang Qingxin,  
Tsinghua University, China*

This short essay takes up Professor Fan Ruiping's paper on the comparison between Confucian ethics and modern Western ethics in light of the 2020 pandemic. Professor Fan argues that the reason China has been more successful in dealing with the pandemic is because Confucian ethics are better suited to a response to the pandemic than Western ethics are. As he suggests, Confucian

family-centered ethics stress the importance of social obligations, making it easier for the government to impose stringent lockdown measures to fight the spread of coronavirus. This essay agrees by and large with Professor Fan's overall thesis, but it cautions against over-exaggeration of the differences between Confucian ethics and Western ethics.

## **Stressing the Moral Value of Confucian Ethical Wisdom in the Global Fight against the Pandemic: A Review of Ruiping Fan's Article**

*Bian Lin,  
Hebei Medical University, China*

In the global fight against the pandemic, in addition to the roles played by politics, economy, science, and other fields, ethical considerations cannot be ignored. Ruiping Fan's article explains in depth how to incorporate the ethical resources of Confucian civilization into the global anti-epidemic process. It recommends that attention be paid to the natural integration of the Chinese

traditional ethical spirit as a cultural phenomenon with the Chinese political system in the fight against the pandemic and to its effectiveness as shown by anti-epidemic practices. With its unique illustration of "essence-energy resonance" to demonstrate the "synchronicity law," the article is well worth further discussion.

## **The World Prospect of Confucian Ethics: Fukuyama's Views of Confucianism**

*Wang Zhanyu,  
Shanxi Medical University, China  
Liang Fei,  
Taiyuan Normal University, China*

Countries and ethnic groups with a Confucian cultural background have performed well during the pandemic. This comparative advantage will inspire efforts to Confucianize ethics. Fukuyama believes that Confucianism as a whole is a defense of authoritarianism but does not pose a major obstacle to liberal democracy, with which it is even compatible in some respects. However, Fukuyama

believes that countries led by Confucianism may suffer from disadvantages such as low social capital. Through Fukuyama, the Western opinion leader, we can see the status of Confucian ethics in the spectrum of Western ethics, but there is still a long way to go for Confucian ethics to gain greater recognition worldwide.

## Can the Ethical Resources of Confucian Civilization Better Solve the Current Epidemic? — Reading Professor Ruiping Fan's Article

*Zhang Yanliang,  
Lanzhou University, China*

This paper summarizes the main ideas and viewpoints of Professor Fan Ruiping's essay "The Current Epidemic: Appealing to the Ethical Resources of Confucian Civilization" and advances three opinions for discussion. On the one hand, it affirms Professor Fan Ruiping's

contribution in resorting to the ethical resources of Confucian civilization to solve the various dilemmas brought about by the pandemic. On the other hand, it points out that the ethical resources of Confucian civilization are limited in their capacity to solve these dilemmas.

## Confucian Culture of Harmony and Its Role in Combating the Coronavirus Pandemic

*Wang Jue,  
Xidian University, China*

This paper addresses the relationship between politics and ethics from the perspective of the Confucian culture of harmony and argues that it is untenable to ignore the supporting role of Chinese ethical values by attributing China's achievements in fighting the epidemic to merely the capacities of governance. What the world might learn from China in combating COVID-19 is not only the

so-called "national capacity," nor the theme of trust, but also some deeper moral insights, such as how to cultivate a sense of mutual responsibility in people and regions around the world. These insights have proven to be important ethical resources that human society urgently needs in the post-epidemic era.

## A Critique on Professor Ruiping Fan's Article and a Moral Analysis of COVID-19 and Exposition of Confucianism

*Lee Shui Chuen,  
Research Center for Chinese Philosophy, Taiwan*

My response to Professor Fan's essay mainly deals with two issues. Firstly, through a simplified analysis of the history and basic ideas of Confucianism, Fan's paper did not grasp the basic idea of "Ren" and "empathy of the Heart/mind of ren" as well as the theoretical structure of "ren-li-de" in Confucianism. Hence, his thesis on Familism and Confucian Virtue Ethics was not based on solid Confucian texts and arguments. Secondly, Principlism is nothing as extreme as Fan described and his analysis on the Covid-19

pandemic are fairly rational and reasonable. The management of the pandemic in the West does have serious defects, but it has nothing to do with Principlism and liberalism. It is mainly due to the misunderstanding and misjudgment of the nature of this new pandemic by specialists and common folks. Lastly, I present a brief outline on how Confucianism could join with democracy and liberty in fighting against Covid-19 effectively performed by Taiwan people.

# Public Lecture on “Chinese and Cross-Cultural Health Humanities Lecture Series: Why is this Pandemic Unprecedented?”

Date: 25 January 2021 (Mon)

Time: 14:30 - 16:00

Online Lecture: Zoom

Language: English

Speakers: Prof. Joseph Tham, Professor, UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights

Attendance: 153

**Chinese and Cross-Cultural Health Humanities Lecture Series**

## WHY IS THIS PANDEMIC UNPRECEDENTED?


**25 JAN 2021 (MON)**  
**2:30-4PM**  
**VIA ZOOM**

**Prof. P. Joseph Tham,**  
**UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights**


One of the most heard words to describe the COVID 19 pandemics is “unprecedented.” But in fact, it doesn’t even make the top 10 list of fatalities among all the epidemics in human history. Why is this time so different? This talk will look at the changes in our perception that makes this epidemic indeed unprecedented. There is a misconception of medicine due to the increased availability and effectiveness of technology, but scientific knowledge is not really as certain and definitive as the media portrays and usually takes years of research to arrive at a consensus. Globalization and the accessibility of communication and social media makes the situation much more immediate. The number game gives us a false sense of control. All these perceptions, expectations, and inexact science are mixed with political and economic implications, generating uncertainties and anxieties in different spheres of society. The talk will offer some conjectures of a post-Covid future.

**Prof. P. Joseph Tham**

Joseph Tham is a Professor of Bioethics at Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum, Italy. Born in Hong Kong and immigrated to Canada at the age of fifteen, he first majored in mathematical sciences and then graduated from medical school at the University of Toronto. After several years of work as a family physician, he entered the seminary of the Legionaries of Christ and was ordained a priest in 2004. He presently teaches bioethics in Regina Apostolorum and was the former dean of the School of Bioethics. He is the editorial coordinator of *Studia Bioethica* and a fellow of the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights.



**Details and Online Registration:**



<https://rel.hkbu.edu.hk/>

Sponsored by Initiation Grant for Faculty Niche Research Areas (FNRA)

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY  
宗教及哲學系

應用倫理研究中心  
Centre for Applied Ethics

協同學習  
Co-learning

# Public Lecture on “COVID-19 Vaccine: Hopes, Hypes and Fairness”

Date: 1 December 2020 (Tue)

Time: 14:30 - 16:00

Online Lecture: Zoom

Language: English

Speakers: Dr. Derrick Au, Director of the Centre for Bioethics and the Chairman of the Bioethics Course Committee of the Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Attendance: 185



FNRA: Chinese and Cross-Cultural Health Humanities Lecture Series

## COVID-19 Vaccine: Hopes, Hypes and Fairness

By Dr. Derrick Au

As the global COVID-19 epidemic continues to take a heavy toll on human lives, public health and the economy, hopes are high that the unprecedented pace of new vaccine development may help bring an end to the epidemic. This talk will be in two parts. The first part takes a critical look at where the hopes lie, the basis of positive expectation, cautions and yet to be resolved questions on the new COVID-19 vaccine(s). The second part considers ethical issues as related to new vaccine development and its allocation when available, focusing on fairness and responsibilities.

**1<sup>st</sup> Dec 2020 (Tue)  
2:30 pm - 4:00 pm  
Via ZOOM**







**Dr. Derrick Au** (區結成醫生，筆名區闊海) is the Director of the Centre for Bioethics at The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the ex-chairman of the Bioethics Course Committee of the Faculty of Medicine, CUHK. He served in medical geriatric and rehabilitation services for two decades before taking up management positions in the Hospital Authority (HA), including Director of Quality and Safety. He is the Chairman of the HA Clinical Ethics Committee. Dr. Au is also a writer on health care and humanities and a columnist.

Faculty of Education  
教育學院  
CUHK Centre for Bioethics  
香港中文大學生命倫理中心  
Faculty of Medicine - Hong Kong  
醫學院  
The Psychology  
心理學系  
The Neuroscience  
神經科學系

**Details and Online Registration:**  
<https://rel.hku.edu.hk/>

Sponsored by Initiation Grant for Faculty Niche Research Areas (FNRA)



## New Research Fellows

### Dr. Kwok Wai Luen

**MSocSc City U, MDiv, MTh Alliance Bible, PhD London**

**Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts; Associate Professor, Department of Religion and Philosophy; Associate Director, Centre for Sino-Christian Studies**



Dr. Kwok Wai-Luen is Associate Dean of Arts, Associate Professor of the Department of Religion and Philosophy, and Associate Director of the Centre for Sino-Christian Studies at Hong Kong Baptist University. He was one of the keynote speakers of the Society for the Study of Christian Ethics 2021 Postgraduate Conference. He served as member of the Theology and Current Affairs Committee of Christian and Missionary Alliance Church Union of Hong Kong (2009-2019). He is a Langham scholar and serves on the Board of directors of Langham Foundation Hong Kong. He has been one of the organizing members of Business as Mission Forum, an initiative that encourages churches to support social enterprises and social innovation, since 2013. He initiated rounds of police-student dialogue after the Umbrella Movement. Since 2020, he initiated the Cultivating Peace program with CEDAR Fund Hong Kong. “Cultivating Peace” aims at promoting the idea of peacebuilding in the society for reconciliation and transformation. Through activities and internet platforms, “Cultivating Peace” promotes four dimensions of peacebuilding: inner peace, interpersonal peace, communal peace and social peace. His most recent book publication related to ethics is, *Love, Desire and Ethics: A Theology of Sex for Chinese Church* (2018, In Chinese).

## New Research Fellows

### Prof. Zhang Jiji

**BA Peking University, MS, PhD Carnegie Mellon University  
Professor, Department of Religion and Philosophy**



I grew up in central China, in a small city of Hubei Province by the Yangtze river. I received my undergraduate training in Beijing, focusing on logic and analytic philosophy. After I got my BA in philosophy, I went to Carnegie Mellon University in Pennsylvania, USA, initially hoping to become a mathematical logician. However, a course titled Probability and Artificial Intelligence shifted my academic interest, from formal deductive systems to inductive logic, epistemology, and methodology. I ended up writing a dissertation on causal reasoning, which has multiple points of contact with not only philosophy but also other disciplines such as computer science, psychology, and statistics.

My main research interests remain interdisciplinary to this day. The key questions that motivate my primary research program concern the extent to which information about cause and effect can be reliably inferred from passive observations (as opposed to active experiments), and the extent to which such inferred causal information can effectively guide predictions and decision-making. I am grateful to the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong for having funded several of my projects in this research program, ranging from epistemological examinations of causal inference to the bearings of causal reasoning on decision theory. The research findings from these projects were published both in premier journals of philosophy and in leading venues of artificial intelligence and machine learning.

I taught at California Institute of Technology and Lingnan University before moving to Hong Kong Baptist University in January 2021. Thanks to the connection of my philosophical work to artificial intelligence, I am affiliated with the newly established Ethical and Theoretical AI lab at HKBU, as well as the Department of Religion and Philosophy. In addition to organizing a monthly lecture series in AI Ethics and Ethical AI, I am seeking to develop projects that will link my previous research efforts to important topics in the ethics of AI, including especially the issue of algorithmic fairness and the issue concerning the interpretability and trustworthiness of machine learning systems. Causal modelling and causal reasoning are expected to be crucial for formally explicating fairness and interpretability, and for automating moral reasoning and decision making.

I am both excited and anxious about the excursion into AI ethics. Although I have taught ethics in some of my classes, I am yet to carry out research in ethics proper. Among the topics I have published on, the closest to moral philosophy are free will and decision theory. I am therefore very thankful for the opportunity to join the Centre for Applied Ethics as a research fellow, where I expect to learn a great deal from distinguished ethicists. I look forward to collaborating with colleagues in the centre and beyond, and I hope to organize and facilitate conversations between experts in ethics and experts in AI.



《中外醫學哲學》

*International Journal of Chinese & Comparative Philosophy of Medicine*  
Vol.18 No.1 2020

Covid-19 疫情的倫理反思

Ethical Reflections on the Covid-19 Pandemic

本期編輯：張 穎

Issue Editor: Ellen Y. Zhang

張 穎 Ellen Y. Zhang	前言：Covid-19 疫情的倫理反思 Introduction: Ethical Reflections on the Covid-19 Pandemic
程國斌 Cheng Guobin	疫區、口罩與無症狀感染者——新型冠狀病毒疫情如何破壞了我們的公共生活 Epidemic Areas, Masks, and the Asymptomatic—How Covid-19 has Hurt our Public Life
李瑞全 Lee Shui Chuen	新冠肺炎病毒疫情中的仁道：從文化與倫理看病毒疫情之啟示 The Dao of Benevolence in the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Revelation from Cultural and Ethical Perspectives
張言亮 Zhang Yanliang	疫情背景下對待無症狀感染者的道德困境與出路探究 Moral Dilemma and Outlet of Treating Asymptomatic Infected Persons against the Background of Epidemic Situation
張 穎 Ellen Y. Zhang	新冠瘟疫蔓延時的「知情同意」原則 The Principle of “Informed Consent” during the COVID-19 Pandemic
陳成斌 Benedict S. B. Chan	2019冠狀病毒病疫情下的道德議題的初步哲學探索 A Preliminary Philosophical Investigation into Moral Issues of the COVID-19 Pandemic
熊 忤、林 芬 Xiong Bian and Lin Fen	如何平衡治理效率與隱私保護？中國和新加坡新冠病毒接觸者追蹤應用程式隱私政策的文本分析 How to Balance Governance Efficiency and Privacy Protection? A Textual Analysis of the Privacy Policies of the COVID-19 Contact-Tracing App in China and Singapore

This journal is listed on ESCI and available for download: <https://repository.hkbu.edu.hk/ijccpm/>





《中外醫學哲學》

*International Journal of Chinese & Comparative Philosophy of Medicine*  
Vol.18 No.2 2020

新冠疫情與倫理探索

The Coronavirus Pandemic and Ethical Exploration

本期編輯：范瑞平、王 珏

Issue Editors: Ruiping Fan and Wang Jue

<p>王 珏 Wang Jue</p>	<p>前言：新冠疫情的危與機 Introduction: The Perils and Promise of the Coronavirus Pandemic</p>
<p>Hans-Marin Sass</p>	<p>冠狀病毒不但襲擊個體，還襲擊政體與團體 The Coronavirus also Attacks Political and Corporate Bodies</p>
<p>范瑞平 Ruiping Fan</p>	<p>大疫當前：訴諸儒家文明的倫理資源 Combating the Coronavirus Pandemic: An Appeal to Confucian Ethical Resources</p>

This journal is listed on ESCI and available for download: <https://repository.hkbu.edu.hk/ijccpm/>

**第十五屆“建構中國生命倫理學”研討會**  
**The Fifteenth Symposium on “Bioethics from Chinese Philosophical / Religious Perspectives”**

南京西北大學與香港浸會大學應用倫理學研究中心擬於2021年下半年在線上舉辦第十五屆“建構中國生命倫理學”研討會。

Northwest University and the Centre for Applied Ethics of Hong Kong Baptist University will co-organize the online Fifteenth Symposium on “Bioethics from Chinese Philosophical/ Religious Perspectives” in Fall 2021.

# ETHICS AND SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



A Publication of the Centre for Applied Ethics, Hong Kong Baptist University

**Director:** Dr. Ellen Y. ZHANG  
Centre for Applied Ethics  
Hong Kong Baptist University  
Tsuen Wan Campus, Hong Kong

**Tel:** (852) 3411-7274

**Fax:** (852) 3411-5151

**E-mail:** [cae@hkbu.edu.hk](mailto:cae@hkbu.edu.hk)

**Web:** <http://cae.hkbu.edu.hk>

## Editorial Board

*Editor-in-chief:* Dr. Ellen Y. ZHANG

- \* *The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the University, or members of the Editorial Board.*
- \* *Reproduction is permitted for educational purposes, but users are requested to credit **Ethics and Society: Newsletter of the Centre for Applied Ethics** and the author(s). A copy of the reprinted material should be sent to the Editorial Board.*

**CENTRE FOR APPLIED ETHICS  
HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY**

Room 109E, 1/F, Tsuen Wan Campus  
Hong Kong Baptist University  
2-12 Yi Lok Street, Tsuen Wan  
New Territories, Hong Kong

**ETHICS AND SOCIETY**

Vol. 27 June 2021

**NEWSLETTER**

**PRINTED MATTER**