

LECTURE 20



Prof. Christian Schwermann

- **Professor of Chinese Language and Literature, Ruhr University Bochum**
- **Dean of the East Asian Institute of Ruhr-University Bochum**
- **Principal Investigators of 2019 German Top Research Group (No. 2036)**

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淡江大學熊貓講座

TAMKANG CLEMENT AND CARRIE CHAIR

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心 眼 長 啥 樣？

└ 中西對比下之心眼概念
及其語意的演變（全程中文）



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Prof. Christian Schwermann

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德國頂尖研究學群（編號2036）主要主持人

2023



5.30 1510~1700

守謙國際會議中心有蓮廳

外國語文學院 敬邀

INTRODUCTION

- Introducing Christian Schwermann, an esteemed scholar renowned for his profound research on the historical semantics of dependency in Early China. With a meticulous focus on the economic dimensions, Schwermann challenges prevailing scholarly paradigms that have dichotomized ancient Chinese societies into the simplistic notions of 'slavery' and 'freedom.' Through a rigorous analysis of the lexicon prevalent in ancient China, he uncovers a nuanced reality, characterized by a diverse array of terms denoting varying degrees of dependency. These terms encompassed temporary forced labor, as well as punitive labor linked to the administration of justice.



- Christian Schwermann's scholarly contributions have been instrumental in expanding our understanding of Early China's complex social fabric. His extensive body of work includes a book, two edited volumes, and a wealth of articles and reviews, totaling an impressive count of 50 publications. Additionally, his expertise has been acknowledged through approximately 150 invitations to deliver talks and lectures, enabling him to disseminate his research findings widely. Notably, Schwermann has demonstrated exceptional mentorship skills, supervising over 120 theses at the M.A., B.A., and Ph.D. levels.

- Dr. Schwermann's academic journey exemplifies a steadfast pursuit of excellence. He earned his Ph.D. in Sinology from the University of Bonn, Germany, between 1999 and 2005, following his completion of dual M.A. degrees in Sinology and English Language and Literature at the same institution. His scholarly endeavors have taken him across borders, fostering a comprehensive understanding of Chinese culture and history through studies at Sichuan University in Chengdu, China, encompassing Sinology, Japanology, and Ancient, Medieval, and Modern History.



- Christian Schwermann's invaluable research and scholarly contributions have positioned him as a prominent figure in the field of Sinology, shedding light on the intricate social dynamics and economic systems prevalent in Early China. His work represents a significant contribution to the broader scholarly discourse and offers new insights into the historical semantics of dependency, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of ancient Chinese societies.

Topic : What Does “Xin Yan” (心眼) Look Like?
The Concept and Semantic Evolution of 'Xin Yan' in a Sino-
Western Comparative Perspective.

ABSTRACT

- On the afternoon of May 30th, in the Lotus Hall of the Shouqian International Conference Center, a Panda Lecture organized by the Foreign Language Institute took place. Prof. Christian Schwermann, the head of the Department of Chinese Language and Culture at Ruhr-University Bochum (RUB) in Germany, opened the lecture with a joke about “Xin Yan” (心眼) and proceeded to explain the concept and semantic evolution of “Xin Yan” (心眼) in a comparative context between Chinese and Western cultures. His lecture delved into the question, "What does ‘Xin Yan’ (心眼) look like?"
- Identifying himself as a "philosopher who finds nourishment in the Chinese language," Prof. Schwermann began by discussing the earliest depiction of St. Augustine illuminated by the sun in a 6th-century Roman mural. He stated, "According to the early Catholic fathers, God is the excellent object seen by the “Xin Yan” (心眼)." He continued, "To see God, the eyes of the heart must be bright and pure. Only then can they perceive God's glory and wisdom. Constantly gazing at God with these eyes is an expression of a holy life."



- Moving on, Prof. Schwermann referred to the concept of "心" (heart) in ancient Chinese philosophy, as discussed by Xunzi and Guanzi, and cited Julian Jaynes, an American psychologist, and his theory of bicameralism. He mentioned that the theory of human consciousness emerged between 2000 and 1000 BC, and prior to that, there was no concept of introspection. The right brain was responsible for operations, while the left brain arranged and imagined the voices of "gods." He believed that this state of selflessness was similar to the story of Butcher Ding in Zhuangzi, where habitual actions are executed subconsciously. He expressed that this implies that "having a long '心眼'" is not a good thing according to the Daoist interpretation.
- Furthermore, Prof. Schwermann referred to the Pure Land Buddhist text, the "Amitābha Sūtra," which describes "Xin Yan" (心眼) as a spiritual eye capable of seeing the Buddha. He drew a parallel with the concept in the Old Testament of Christianity, where purifying the heart allows one to see God. He extensively discussed the oldest reference to "Xin Yan" (心眼) in the Zhuangzi and the therapeutic criticism of Hans-Georg Moeller, repeatedly exploring the implications of "Xin Yan" (心眼).



- Finally, he concluded the lecture by juxtaposing the Christian image of the "heart illuminated by the sun" with the Chinese phrase "心眼無障 遙見世尊" (heart-eye unobstructed, able to see the Buddha from afar). He believed that after the introduction of Buddhism to China, the concept of "Xin Yan" (心眼) was replaced by Buddhist concepts, depreciating its value and aligning it with the definition of the Middle Ages in the West.



MINUTE

- College of Foreign Languages invited Professor Christian Schwermann, Chair of the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Ruhr-University Bochum (RUB) in Germany, to give a speech. The speaker is scheduled to visit from May 27th to June 3rd. The lecture titled "What Does 'Xin Yan' (心眼) Look Like? - The Concept and Semantic Evolution of 'Xin Yan' in a Sino-Western Comparative Perspective" will be conducted entirely in Chinese and is scheduled for May 30th. It will take place in the Chang Yeo Lan International Conference Hall at Hsu Shou-Chlien International Conference Center on Tamkang campus.



- On May 30th at 1:30 pm, Professor Christian Schwermann, the panda speaker, along with his wife, joined Wu Wanbao, Dean of the School of Foreign Languages, and Lin Yuxian, Dean of the German Department, in paying a visit to President Ge Huanzhao and Chairman Zhang Jiayi.



- During the meeting, President Ge warmly welcomed Professor Christian Schwermann, who visited Taiwan for the first time, and expressed gratitude to him and Wu Wanbao for their active efforts in promoting exchanges between the two schools and departments. Chairman Zhang praised Professor Christian Schwermann for his impressive fluency in Chinese and elaborated on the significance of Tamkang hosting the panda lecture. Professor Christian Schwermann, expressed his appreciation to the school for the invitation and shared his positive experience, highlighting the comfortable accommodations, participation in the Graduation Ceremony of the Faculty of Arts, and meaningful interactions with teachers and students.



- As a gesture of gratitude, President Ge and Chairman Zhang presented the "Panda Trophy" and vases adorned with calligraphy by Li Qimao and Master Zhang Binghuang. The calligraphy depicted the Tamkang campus and the lyrics of the school song. In return, Shi Keli expressed his appreciation by presenting the painting "Blaues Wunder" and the book "Painting and Talking about Qianyuan," which was published by Ruhr University.

