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City University of Hong Kong
三十周年紀念 30th Anniversary

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Speaker

Professor Torbjörn Lodén

Professor of Chinese Language and Culture at Stockholm University

Visiting Professor at City University of Hong Kong



On the Social Dynamics of Philosophical Ideas: Dai Zhen's Critique of Neo-Confucianism

on

Thursday, 23 January 2014 at 4:30 pm

at

Connie Fan Multi-media Conference Room

4/F Cheng Yick-chi Building

City University of Hong Kong

Tat Chee Avenue, Kowloon

Abstract

What are the political implications of basic philosophical orientations such as monism and dualism, materialism and idealism? Can one say that a monistic worldview tends to promote social and political change, while a dualistic view of the world is rather linked to political conservatism? Or is it the other way around? And what about materialism and idealism? Was the Soviet Gulag a logical outcome of the dialectical materialism of Karl Marx? Should we, as Max Weber argued, see the rise of capitalism in Europe as largely a result of the influence of the Protestant ethic, especially as espoused by John Calvin? In his lecture Professor Lodén will argue that the 18th century Chinese scholar Dai Zhen's critique of Neo-Confucianism shows that such basic philosophical orientations are politically indeterminate and that we should base our philosophical views on intellectual criteria rather than on how basic philosophical ideas are used in practice to underpin various political views and actions.

Biography

Professor Torbjörn Lodén is Professor of Chinese Language and Culture at Stockholm University, Director of the Stockholm Confucius Institute and a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities. Since 2011 he has been a Visiting Professor at City University of Hong Kong. In the 1970's he served for three years as Cultural Attaché at the Swedish Embassy in Beijing. In his research he has dealt mainly with various aspects of China's intellectual history, from ancient times to the present, but he has also written about Chinese history, literature and politics. He has published several books and more than 150 articles, mainly in Swedish but also in English, Chinese and French. During his two years in Hong Kong he has published two books in Swedish, a textbook for beginner students of Chinese and a book discussing some of the major issues now facing Chinese culture and society.

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