

**Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange Cover Page
for Interim and Final Reports**

Interim Report **Final Report**

- Domestic Region American Region European Region
 Asia-Pacific Region Developing Regions

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Project Title: Modern and Contemporary Taiwanese Philosophy 臺灣現代與當代哲學

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Institution(s): University of Ljubljana, Slovenia; Academia Sinica, R.O.C.

Project Director(s): Professor Jana S. Rošker, PhD

Project Co-Director(s): Professor Lee Ming-huei, PhD

Date Report Submitted: 05.07.2021

**Research grant RG004-U-17 (Modern and Contemporary Taiwanese Philosophy
臺灣現代與當代哲學)**

Interim report for the third year (July 2020-June 2021)

Due to the travel restrictions imposed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project was extended for 1 year, i.e. until June 30, 2022 (without additional financing). The final report will hence be submitted after June 30, 2022.

During the third year of the research project, the project director Jana S. Rošker and the project team members have been active in the following areas that are connected to the research topic:

- 1) Constructing and maintaining the project website (see this [link](#));
- 2) Organizing and guiding an online round table on the project topic (Modern and Contemporary Taiwanese Philosophy); (see this [link](#))
- 3) Online public lecture on Covid-19, Fang Dongmei and the Philosophy of Life (see this [link](#))
- 4) Publishing several project related works:
 - 2 academic articles in high impact international academic journals
 - 1 special issue in a high impact factor academic journal *Asian Studies*
 - 1 edited volume - book on Taiwanese philosophy (Cambridge Scholars Publishing)
- 5) Disseminating the project
 - 1 radio interview – introduction of the Taiwanese philosopher Xu Fuguan and his aesthetics (see this [link](#))
 - 1 online presentation of the project Modern and Contemporary Taiwanese Philosophy (see this [link](#))

Due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, several activities had to be canceled and postponed respectively. Among these are:

- 2 guest lectures that were planned to be carried out by the project leader in Taiwan in 2021 at the Fu-jen University and at the Academia Sinica respectively. These guest lectures will probably be carried out in summer 2022.
- 2 participations at international conferences (i.e. the 4th International EACP (European Association of Chinese Philosophy) conference that was planned to take place in June 2021 at the University of Macerata in Italy, and the International conference on the Significance of Contemporary Confucianism that was planned to take place in Taipei (NTU) in June 2021). While the new date for the former meeting has been postponed to September 2023, the NTU conference will be canceled.
- An international workshop on Taiwanese philosophy with participants from Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe in April 2020, which was supposed to take place in Ljubljana. The workshop has been preliminary postponed to December 2021.
- Book presentation: Jana Rošker's new book on Taiwanese female philosophy was originally planned to be presented in late October 2020; the project team members have already purchased the airplane ticket for Professor Lin Yueh-hui, who was supposed to deliver a speech at this presentation. Unfortunately, the book presentation had to be postponed to a later date.

Below, please find a short description of all abovementioned activities and research results (1. – 5.) that have been successfully carried out in spite of the pandemic.

Ad 1). The research project website

was established in September 2018 by the project webmaster Jasna Bavec.

Its general structure is divided in to six individual tabs. On the first page, there is general information on the project, and underneath there are separate tabs, containing information and reports about our activities various areas of research:

1. Research summary
2. History (of previous collaborations with contemporary Taiwanese philosophers)
3. Publications
4. Research material
5. Reports
6. Presentations of Taiwanese philosophy at international conferences abroad
7. Guest lectures
8. Dissemination

The website has been continuously updated and it contains all the relevant information about our research and its dissemination.

**Ad 2) Organizing and guiding an online round table on the project topic
Modern and Contemporary Taiwanese Philosophy);**



The event was organized and guided by the project director **Jana S. Rošker**. The round table was carried out on **March 4, 2021**, and was part of the *Virtual Symposium "Conversations on Chinese Philosophy"*, hosted by the *University of Naples "L'Orientale"* and *Tallinn University*.

The audience was very large, for the event was attended by over 80 people.

Participants:

Professor Jana S. Rošker, *University of Ljubljana, Slovenia*

Professor Lee Ming-huei, *Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan*

Professor Fabian Heubel, *Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan*

Professor Huang Kuan-min, *Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan*

Assistant Professor Wu Hui-ling, *Fu Jen Catholic University, New Taipei City, Taiwan*

The participants have been discussing about the role, function and significance of **modern and contemporary Taiwanese philosophy** and its contributions to the further development of Chinese philosophy, especially during the second half of the 20th century.

Basic approaches:

The speakers were introducing and discussing the following contents:

While the Chinese conceptual tradition (especially Confucianism) fell out of favor from the 1950s onwards and was often banned or at least severely criticized on the mainland, Taiwanese philosophers constantly strove to preserve and develop it. Many of them tried to modernize their own traditions through dialogs with Western thought, especially with the ideas of the European Enlightenment. However, it was not only about preserving tradition; in the second half of the 20th century, several complex and coherent philosophical systems emerged in Taiwan. The creation of these discourses is evidence of the great creativity and innovative power of many Taiwanese theorists, whose work is still largely unknown in the Western world.

Professor Rošker and Professor Lee have also introduced the results of the research project *Modern and Contemporary Taiwanese Philosophy* (RG004-U-17), which is supported by the Taiwanese Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for international scholarly exchange. In this context, they have also introduced two recent publications on the project related topic:

A special issue on Taiwanese philosophy of the academic journal *Asian*

Studies published in September 2020 at the University of Ljubljana.

An edited volume entitled *Modern and Contemporary Taiwanese Philosophy:*

Traditional Foundations and New Developments, published in January 2021 at the Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Ad 3) Online academic guest lecture on Covid-19, Fang Dongmei and the Philosophy of Life

https://youtu.be/I_bAiNdYabQ?t=443

This online guest lecture was delivered by the project leader, Professor Jana S. Rošker. It was entitled *COVID-19 and traditional Chinese ethics*, was hosted by the Beijing Normal University in Mainland China and was a part of an international school on Confucian philosophy that has been organized by the Department of philosophy at the same university.

The lecture was focused upon seeking reasonable solutions of the current (and possible future) pandemics. Because the COVID-19 pandemic is a global crisis, it can only be solved through intercultural dialogue. And because ethics is an important part of any crisis solution strategies, the lecture was exploring possibilities to establish a new global ethics, suitable for the present period. It exposed some problems, connected to Western individualism, and introduced in this context the Confucian relational ethics and philosophy of life. The lecturer, Professor Jana Rošker has then in detail introduced the Taiwanese philosopher Fang Dongmei as one of the main representatives of the modernization of this holistic Confucian philosophy.

Fang Dongmei (1899-1977) belongs to the most influential Chinese philosophers who lived and worked in Taiwan during the second half of the 20th century. The present article aims to clarify his view on the basic nature of the human Self. This assessment is more multifaceted than it seems at a first glimpse, for Fang's philosophy is more complex than it seems. As a member of the so-called neo-conservative streams of thought, he criticized the Western-type modernization and aimed to revive the holistic onto-epistemology of classical Confucianism. On the other hand, he highlighted the importance of its basic paradigm which underlay the Confucian discourses already from their very beginning, i.e. since the *Book of Changes*, namely the principle of creative creativity (*shengshengbuxi* 生生不息).

Then, the lecturer compared his philosophy to the contemporary theories created by the mainland philosopher Chen Lai, and revealed some of the most problematic parts of his ontology. The lecture concluded with a very lively and long debate, based upon the questions raised by the international students audience.

Ad 4) Publications

In the report period (July 2020 – June 2021), the project director and the project members have published the following items:

- a) 1 independent academic article in high impact international academic Journal *Asian Studies*. The PDF of the article can be found [here](#).
- b) 1 independent academic article in high impact international academic Journal *Synthesis philosophica*. The PDF of the article can be found [here](#).
- c) 1 special issue in a high impact factor academic journal *Asian Studies* (including 4 additional academic articles published by the project team members). The PDF of the volume can be found [here](#).
- d) 1 edited volume – book (academic monograph) on Taiwanese philosophy (Cambridge Scholars Publishing). Announcement [here](#); Extract: [here](#)

Ad a) Téa Sernelj. 2021. “The Problem of the Authenticity of the Aesthetic Concept *qiyun shengdong*: Xu Fuguan’s Analysis and Interpretation”. In: *Asian Studies*. 9(1): 159-180. DOI: 10.4312/as.2021.9.1.159-180.

In January 2021, the project team member Téa Sernelj has published an academic article on the Modern Confucian aesthetic theory of the Taiwanese philosopher Xu Fuguan. The article explores Xu Fuguan’s analysis and interpretation of the concept of *qiyun sheng-dong* 氣韻生動, which is considered to be one of the most important, fundamental and complex concepts in Chinese aesthetics and art. It was created by Xie He in the Wei Jin period (220–420 AD), which is marked as a turning point in the development of Chinese aesthetics. The complexity of the concept of *qiyun shengdong* is reflected in literary works, painting, calligraphy, and music, as well as in literary theory and the theory of painting. According to Xu Fuguan, *qi* refers to the external features of the artwork, while *yun* expresses the internal characteristics that are a matter of the human spirit. For Xu, *shengdong* signifies the manifestation and fusion of *qi* and *yun* in the artwork. Xu Fuguan claimed that the profound comprehension of this concept is fundamental for understanding the essence of Chinese art. The article also addresses the problem of translating this aesthetic concept into English and discusses the problem of its authenticity.

Ad b) Jana S. Rošker 2021. “Kant, Confucianism, and “Global Rooted Philosophy” in Taiwan: From Mou Zongsan to Lee Ming-huei”. *Synthesis Philosophica* 71 (1/2021) p.p. 217–238. Doi: 10.21464/sp36113

In January 2021, the project director Jana S. Rošker has published an academic article on the Taiwanese philosophers Mou Zongsan and Lee Ming-huei in the philosophical academic journal *Synthesis Philosophica*, which is published in Croatia.

In Taiwan, the Confucian revival was always defined by the search for a synthesis between Western and traditional Confucian thought. Taiwanese Modern Confucians aimed to create a system of ideas and values capable of resolving modern, globalised societies’ social and political problems. Mou Zongsan, the best-known member of the second generation of Modern New Confucianism, aimed to revive the Chinese philosophical tradition through a dialogue with Modern European philosophy, especially with the works of Immanuel Kant. His follower Lee Ming-huei is arguably the most renowned expert on Kantian philosophy in the entire Sinitic region. The present paper aims to compare their respective approaches and evaluate them in a broader context of modern Chinese thought. I will first introduce Mou Zongsan’s elaborations on Kant. In the following, I will present the main aspects of Lee Ming-huei’s development of Mou’s theories and provide in later sections a critical assessment of Lee’s philosophical innovation, focusing upon the evaluation of his conceptualisation of immanent transcendence and Confucian deontology.

Ad c) Special issue on Modern and Contemporary Taiwanese philosophy in a high impact factor academic journal *Asian Studies* (including 4 additional academic articles published by the project team members). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4312/as.2020.8.3>
The issue was edited by edited by the project director, Professor Jana S. Rošker.

The main goal of this issue is to show the broader academic audience dealing with the fields of Philosophy, Chinese or East Asian studies that Taiwanese philosophers have played an important role in the development of modern Chinese philosophy, and especially in the second half of the 20th century.

Articles contributed by the project leader and the project team members, i.e.

Jana Rošker (see <https://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/as/article/view/9091>)

Tea Sernelj (see <https://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/as/article/view/9200>)

Byong Yoong Kang (see <https://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/as/article/view/9115>)

Marko Ogrizek (see <https://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/as/article/view/9141>)

Besides, this special issue also contains articles written by numerous well-known Taiwanese researchers and other international experts on the topic, i.e.

Huang Kuan-Min (see <https://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/as/article/view/9099>)

Fabian Heubel (see <https://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/as/article/view/9236>)

Wang Keping (see <https://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/as/article/view/9091>)

Ady Van den Stock (see <https://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/as/article/view/9072>)

Forkan Ali (see <https://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/as/article/view/9114>)

Bart Dessen (see <https://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/as/article/view/8966>)

Jan Vrhovski (see <https://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/as/article/view/9066>)

In contrast to the mainland, Taiwanese philosophy of that time had almost no connection with either Marxism or any of the many streams of post-Marxist philosophy. While theorists from the People's Republic of China were mainly dealing with various forms, issues and innovations in the field of the Sinization of Marxism,¹ those working on Taiwan devoted themselves to the exploration and adaptation of other forms of Western modernity, especially those deriving from Kant and German classical philosophy. They wanted to modernize their own (i.e. Chinese) traditions through the ideas of the European Enlightenment. While in the 1950s the Chinese

conceptual tradition (in particular, Confucianism) fell into disrepair and was often prohibited, or at least severely criticized, on the mainland, Taiwanese philosophers were constantly striving for its preservation and development.

However, at issue was not only the preservation of tradition; in the second half of the 20th century, several complex and coherent philosophical systems emerged in Taiwan. The creation of these discourses is proof of the great creativity and innovativeness of many Taiwanese theorists. Here, it is particularly important to highlight the Modern or New Confucianism and its most famous Taiwanese representative, Mou Zongsan. Nevertheless, Confucianism is not the only stream of thought that was developed and subjected to innovation in post-war Taiwan; during the same period, we could witness many other forms of investigating and developing traditional Chinese thought on the island. In this regard, the Neo-Daoist currents and the Taiwan-ese Buddhist studies are certainly worth mentioning. Besides, modern Taiwanese philosophers have also enriched and advanced the originally Western medieval scholastic thought by establishing a specific school of the so-called Taiwanese Neo-Scholasticism, which was founded at the Fu-jen Catholic University. In the second half of the 20th century, specific schools of logical thought (including both Western and Chinese logic) also developed in several Taiwanese universities. It is also important to highlight that even though the philosophical currents in modern and contemporary Taiwan belong to the most influential and important streams of thought in contemporary East Asian theory, they are still unrecognized as specifically Taiwanese. Moreover, the main reasons for the immense importance of Taiwanese philosophy for East Asia and the contemporary world are twofold. First, they can be found in its contributions to the preservation of traditional Chinese, especially Confucian thought. Secondly, its development of specific innovative philosophical approaches and systems profoundly influenced the theoretical discourses in the entire East Asian region. The philosophical currents in modern Taiwan were mainly developed during the second half of 20th century, in which the philosophical theory in mainland China was, as already noted, largely limited to the Sinization of Marxist thought. Hence, for many decades, Taiwanese philosophy represented the only driving force of developing, modernizing and up-grading traditional Chinese thought and its syntheses with Western thought. As such, they soon gained a widespread popularity in most of the other East Asian societies that were traditionally influenced by classical Confucian thought, as for example Japan and South Korea.

The present issue of Asian Studies aims to introduce its important contributions to the wider international academic public, and to discuss and exchange knowledge regarding their philosophical approaches, ideas and methods. Given the fact that numerous Taiwanese philosophers belong to the pinnacle of contemporary theoretic achievements in Chinese-speaking world, and because there is still an almost complete lack of awareness of this fact in European academic circles, this issue aims to clarify and present several important aspects of modern and contemporary Taiwanese philosophy, which have been summarized into three scopes of contents. The first deals with the revitalization of Confucian philosophy, while the second introduces Taiwanese philosophy from broader East Asian perspectives. The third scope is entirely devoted to one modern Taiwanese philosopher. It critically introduces Fang Dongmei (also known as Thomé Fang), who is still practically unknown in the Western world, even though his remarkable works show he was an important, original philosopher and a brilliant scholar, who might well be compared with the most famous Taiwanese theoretician, Mou Zongsan. The fourth and last scope traces the innovative Taiwanese transformations and modernizations of Chinese logic and Chinese Buddhist as well as Daoist philosophy from the beginning of the 20th century to the present.

With its rich palette of different topics that are all linked to modern Taiwanese thought and reveal the multifarious richness of its ideas, this intriguing volume will doubtless show that Taiwanese philosophy can be seen as a bridge that links different discourses across time and space by illuminating and exposing various otherwise neglected traditions of Chinese philosophical thought. I also believe that it will show why this connective function and dialogical nature is precisely the greatest significance of contemporary Taiwanese philosophy, and sincerely hope that it will raise awareness of this among the wider circles of European academia. And last, but not least, my sincere wish is also that this special issue of our journal may serve, similar to Taiwanese philosophy, which is its subject matter, as a bridge connecting many different ideas, viewpoints and values.

Ad d) Book (edited volume) entitled *Modern and Contemporary Taiwanese Philosophy: Traditional Foundations and New Developments*

This book that was edited by the project director Jana S. Rošker, was published at the British publishing house Cambridge Scholars Publishing in November 2020. It was officially released and printed in January 2021.

The acknowledgement of the support from the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation was stated in the very beginning of the book, under the title Acknowledgement.

The chief editor of the volume was the project director Jana Rošker. She also wrote the Foreword and one of the chapters, introducing the field of Taiwanese philosophy. This chapter is entitled *The Role of Taiwanese Philosophy in the Second Half of the 20th Century*.

The project co-director, Professor Lee Ming-huei, has also contributed a chapter, entitled *The Problem of “Inner Sageliness and Outer Kingliness” Revisited: On the Controversy raised by Yu Ying-shih’s Work Zhu Xi’s Historical World*.

The project research team member Téa Sernelj also contributed a chapter entitled *Modern Confucianism and the Methodology of Chinese Aesthetics: Body and Mind in Xu Fuguan’s Theory*,

In her Foreword, the project leader Jana S. Rošker describes the book, exposing that it is a collection of translations of texts on modern Taiwanese philosophy, which were originally written in Chinese, and mainly deal with traditional Chinese thought. She also explains that this philosophy did not originate in mainland China, that is, in some supposedly logical “centre” of Chinese culture, but on its alleged “periphery,” namely on the beautiful island of Taiwan. She points out that the main reason for compiling this book was to show to the wider circles of Western readers that Taiwanese philosophers have played an important role in the development of modern Chinese philosophy, and especially in the second half of the 20th century. Therefore, the author emphasizes that the book includes several pioneering Western studies regarding the work of different modern and contemporary Taiwanese streams of thought.

In the chapter *The Role of Taiwanese Philosophy in the Second Half of the 20th Century* she introduces the role and the function of Taiwanese philosophy in the context of Sinophone theory. In the second half of the 20th century, the philosophers in mainland China were mostly investigating Marxist and Leninist theories, aiming to adapt them to specific Chinese conditions. In this process, they had to deal with ideological directives from the Communist Party of China (CPC). Hence, while on the mainland, the Chinese ideational tradition was being exiled to the graveyards of “feudal ideologies” up until the 1980’s, Taiwanese theoreticians – similar to those in Hong Kong – were developing, upgrading and modernizing mostly Confucian and partly Daoist thought. Jana S. Rošker emphasizes that without the continuity that was sustained, preserved and developed by Taiwanese theoreticians, a lot of important research topics would have faded into oblivion, as it would not have been possible for them to keep developing. This interruption of knowledge could certainly have had catastrophic consequences for the development of new methodologies for researching Chinese philosophy. Besides, Taiwan in the second half of the 20th century was also a place of highly innovative philosophers, who developed their own theoretical systems and are among the most important personalities of Chinese philosophy in the last century.

In his chapter on “Inner Sageliness and Outer Kingliness” Revisited: On the Controversy raised by Yu Ying-shih’s Work *Zhu Xi’s Historical World*, the project co-director, Professor Lee Ming-huei offers a comprehensive analysis of the important binary category of “Inner Sageliness and Outer Kingliness”, which belongs to the main categories of traditional Chinese political philosophy. He points out that the expression “inner sageliness outer kingliness” (neisheng waiwang 内聖外王) originates from the “Tianxia 天下” chapter of the *Zhuangzi*. In the later ages, however, the expression was often borrowed with the intention to highlight the special characteristics of Confucian tradition, and even transformed into the very notion of Confucian self-identity. In fact, it is very appropriate to epitomize the characteristics of Confucian tradition with the phrase “inner sageliness outer kingliness” in order to distinguish it from the two schools of Daoism and Buddhism. This is also the reason why scholars have rarely objected to it over the centuries. Nevertheless, in the past, Confucian scholars offered different interpretations of the essential meaning of the expression “inner sageliness and outer kingliness”, which have become even more diverse until the present day. The chapter explores and analyses these various interpretations and concludes that each of them reflects the socio-political circumstances in which it arose.

The research project team member, associate professor Téa Sernelj has contributed the chapter on Xu Fuguan's philosophy, entitled *Modern Confucianism and the Methodology of Chinese Aesthetics: Body and Mind in Xu Fuguan's Theory*. In this paper, she deals with the philosophic theory and epistemological methodology of the Modern Confucian Xu Fuguan (1903–1982), an important Taiwanese thinker of the 20th century, whose theoretical contributions are presently in the center of academic interests in China and Taiwan, while they are still almost completely unexplored in the West. The chapter is mainly focused upon Xu's interpretation of the concepts of bodily recognition and the creative potential Qi that are forming the basis for the unification of body and mind as a fundamental method of traditional Chinese perception of reality.

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Ad 5) The research project dissemination

- a) Radio interview about the Taiwanese philosopher Xu Fuguan and his aesthetics with the project team member Téa Sernelj.

On February 25, 2021, the project member Téa Sernelj was interviewed on Radio Slovenia. The interview was conducted in Slovene language. In this one hour broadcast, dr. Sernelj introduced traditional Chinese aesthetics through the lens of Xu Fuguan's work. As she has shown in the interview, Xu Fuguan, who belongs to the second generation of Taiwanese Modern Confucians, is a most important figure in the preservation, development and modernization of Chinese and East Asian aesthetic theory.

- b) Online presentation of this research project RG004-U-17, which is entitled *Modern and Contemporary Taiwanese Philosophy* 臺灣現代與當代哲學 and financed by the Chiang Ch'ing-kuo Foundation. This presentation was organized by the project director Jana S. Rošker and by the project team members Téa Sernelj, Marko Ogrizek, and Jan Vrhovski.

The audience was large, for the event was attended by over 60 people.

This online event was organized as a part of the online Symposium which celebrated the 25th jubilee of the establishment of the Department of Asian Studies at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

In this presentation, which was carried out in Slovene language, the project team members first introduced the Chiang Ch'ing-kuo Foundation, its important role in international academic exchange, and its program.

Then, they introduced the main contents, the crucial methodological approaches and the results of this project, which has been enabled by the support of the CCK foundation for international scholarly exchange. The introduction was followed by a 20 minutes Q & A session and an interesting debate on challenges and possibilities of the CCKF program on the one hand, and the role, function, and specific characteristics of Taiwanese philosophy on the other.

Report submission date: July 5, 2021

Report submitted by the project director, Professor Jana S. Rošker

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of connected loops and a final horizontal stroke.