

Taiwan Workshops

Itsuki Hayashi
Post-doctoral Fellow
Faculty of Letters
Kyoto University

During my stay in Taiwan I attended three workshops: Asian philosophy workshop at National Chengchi University (March 7 and 8), Analytic philosophy workshop at National Yang Ming University (March 11), and Applied Philosophy Workshop at Tsinghua University (March 13). I presented my paper at National Chengchi University, and participated as a discussant in the latter two universities. Overall, I received valuable suggestions to improve my research, made new connections, and practiced my Chinese.

People in Taiwan, the hosts and the fellow participants of the workshop as well as the people of the cities I visited, were immensely hospitable. I also got to practice my Chinese on daily basis and confirmed that if I practice more I could probably wield the language more or less comfortably within a year. In short, I thought I would be happy to live there.

In all of the workshops attended, the organizers paid special effort to achieve a balance between high academic quality and younger scholars' participation. There were a mixture of presentations, by the more advanced scholars and undergraduates, and care was taken to incite the younger, more reticent participants to contribute to the discussion. The importance of such measures goes without saying, and should be implemented in future workshops. In order to secure an optimal outcome, however, we should also undertake a subtle but important task of balancing encouragement with criticism, which can be difficult.

At Chengchi University I presented my paper, titled "Buddhist Emergentism: Dharmakirti on the Reality of Color". In this presentation I addressed a paradox that exists in Indian Buddhist philosophy, namely, that color would be taken as both real and unreal if we follow Dharmakirti's ontology literally. I surveyed several important solutions by Tibetan Buddhist philosophers, and suggested that one of them was the most viable, in spite of its unpopularity. Against objections posed on this solution, I argued that the solution resembles a metaphysical theory called emergentism, and that the objections could be sufficiently overcome by taking the notion of emergence seriously.

I received three important comments on my presentation. Dr. Jay Garfield of National University of Singapore gave a confirmation that my representation of the Tibetan controversy was accurate. Dr. Keng Ching of Chengchi University suggested that the paradox may be answerable within Dharmakirti's own system, that is, without resorting to the Tibetan contributions. Finally, Dr. Yasuo Deguchi of Kyoto University recommended that I address problems for emergentism and consider how the Buddhist version might contribute to the view. With these advices in mind, I am currently reexamining my discussion to produce a paper for journal publication.

Probably the most important achievement from the trip was that we decided on the inauguration of the Asian Analytic Philosophy circle, with chief representatives being Professors Yasuo Deguchi of Kyoto University, Jay Garfield of National University of Singapore, and Chen-kuo Lin of National Chengchi University. I am eager to participate in and contribute to this new and promising enterprise.