

Participants

Organizers

Prof. Dr. Johandes Brachtendorf
(UT, Faculty of Catholic Theology)
Dr. Tilo Eilebrecht
(UT, Department of Philosophy)
Prof. Dr. Achim Mittag
(UT, Department of Chinese Studies)
Dr. Philip Scherer
(UT, Department of Chinese Studies)

Invited Participants

Dr. des. Eric Offen Appiah
(UT, Faculty of Catholic Theology)
Dr. cand. Sebastian Cabezas
(UT, Department of Philosophy)
Dr. des. Felix Clausberg
(Berlin)
Prof. Dr. Cui Xiaojiao 崔晓姣
(BNU, Department of Philosophy)
Prof. Dr. DAI Haiqiang 代海强
(BNU, Department of Philosophy)
Prof. Dr. DONG Chunyu 董春雨
(BNU, Department of Philosophy)
Prof. Dr. Volker Drecoll
(UT, Faculty of Protestant Theology)
Jun. Prof. Emily Graf
(UT, Department of Chinese Studies)
Dr. cand. Jonas Hodel
(UT, Department of Philosophy)
Dr. JIANG Zhouwei 蒋周伟
(UT, College of Fellows)
LI Peiyang 李沛阳
(UT, Department of Philosophy)
Prof. Dr. LIANG Yibin 梁亦斌
(BNU, Department of Philosophy)
Prof. Dr. LIU Chengji 刘成纪
(BNU, Department of Philosophy)
Prof. Dr. Thomas Sattig
(UT, Department of Philosophy)
Prof. Dr. Niels Weidtmann
(UT, College of Fellows)
Prof. Dr. Wu Xiangdong 吴向东
(BNU, Dean of the School of Philosophy)
Prof. Dr. Xu Kefei 徐克飞
(BNU, Department of Philosophy)
Dr. ZHENG Xudong 郑旭东
(BNU, Department of Philosophy)

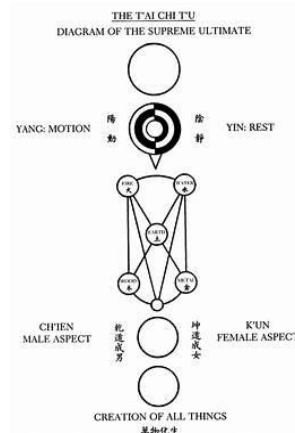
About the Workshop

The common parlance says that every beginning is hard. What actually constitutes the alleged difficulty in getting started? May it be that apart from objective elements we also must consider subjective or psychological elements? Manifestly, beginnings create a high level of contingency and hence pose great challenges to decision-makers and actors. In coping with these challenges, positive energies are being released. In retrospective, beginnings therefore tend to become fixed stars of identity formation. This is the “magic” that dwells in every beginning, as Hermann Hesse has it. In the Chinese tradition, these magical moments are referred to as “germs” (*ji* 幾), which we must recognize in order to seize the glittering opportunities in the air. It becomes clear that the notion of beginnings encompass not only such sort of magical thinking, but also manifold questions of cosmology, mythology, ontology, theology, ethics and aesthetics, as well as connotations of spontaneity, autopoiesis and momentum of its own. The exploration of this notion thus provides a useful forum for an interdisciplinary and intercultural debate and critical review of a variety of methodological approaches to such explorations.

In the course of mutual visits of delegations from Beijing Normal University and the University of Tübingen in the recent years, two key areas of advancing the two universities' cooperation and exchange were identified: philosophy and educational science, including teachers' education. To get this cooperation and the exchange especially among young scholars started, two kick-off workshops on these two areas were agreed upon. Taking the lead, this workshop features the beginning within the horizon of philosophy.



KICK-OFF WORKSHOP · PHILOSOPHY
BEIJING NORMAL UNIVERSITY—UNIVERSITY OF TÜBINGEN
TÜBINGEN, MAY 21–23, 2026

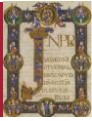


The Beginning: Pluralistic Perspectives in East and West

起初：东西方多元视角探讨

Organized by
Department of Philosophy in cooperation with
China Centre Tübingen (CCT)
(both University of Tübingen)

Venue & Accomodation



Venue

University of Tübingen
China Centre Tübingen (CCT)
Hintere Grabenstr. 26, 72070 Tübingen

Accomodation for participants from abroad

Guest House of the University of Tübingen
Lessingweg 3
72076 Tübingen
☎ +49 7071 25-36492, -36493

Hotel Venezia
Dieselstraße 2
72074 Tübingen
☎ +49 7071 98820

Contact

Achim Mittag ☎ +49-1711913592

Thursday, May 21 周四 5月21日



- 10:00–10:45** Punting boat tour from “Casino am Neckar” to Hölderlin Tower
11:00–11:15 Visit of Hölderlin Tower
11:20–12:20 Luncheon at Hölderlinturm Museumscafé:
12:45–13:45 Visit of University's Museum at Schloss Hohentübingen
14:30–15:00 Opening Session and group photo
15:00–16:30 **Felix Clausberg:**
Spunto: Morphogenetic Incipience in Early Chinese Thought
Cui Xiaojiao:
Before Form Takes Shape: Daoist Reflections on Contingency and the Problem of Beginnings
16:30–17:00 Coffee break
17:00–18:30 **Tilo Eilebrecht:**
Asking About the Origin of Development: Early Chinese Cosmogony in the *Hengxian*
Eric Offen Appiah:
Atemporal and Temporal Beginnings of the Cosmos:
A Scholastic Debate over the Concept of Creatio ex nihilo
19:00 Dinner at Weinstube Forelle

Saturday, May 23 周六 5月23日



- 9:00–10:30** **Liu Chengji:**
The Interpretation of the Six Confucian Classics and the Construction of Early Chinese State
Zheng Xudong:
The Origin of the State: On the Question of the Asiatic Mode of Production
10:30–11:00 Coffee break
11:00–12:30 **Wu Xiangdong:**
The Civilizational Nature of Chinese Modernization
Philip Scherer:
Guoxue Scholars on the “Beginning” of Chinese Civilization: Debates from the Late Qing to the Present
12:30–13:30 Lunch break
13:30–14:30 **Xu Kefei:**
The Maoism of Tel Quel Around May 1968
Dong Chunyu:
Generative AI: Could It Move from Language to Reality
14:30–15:00 Round-off Discussion
15:00–15:15 Coffee break
15:30 Transfer to Bebenhausen Monastery
16:00–17:00 Visit of Bebenhausen Monastery
18:00 Dinner at Landhotel Hirsch

Wednesday, May 20 周三 5月20日



- 17:50** Arrival at Frankfurt Airport; transfer to Tübingen
Check-in at Guest House and Hotel Venezia

Images:

Cover page, left side: “Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate” (*Taijitu* 太極圖) by Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017–1073). Right side: Scene from Michelangelo's (1475–1564) “The Creation” in the Sistine Chapel.
Page 2 above: Decorated letter “I” (“In principio erat verbum”, John 1:1) from the *Book of Kells* (folio 292r; ca. 800 CE).
Page 2 below and pages 3–4 above and below: Five of thirteen characters entried in the *Erya* 爾雅 (the first surviving Chinese dictionary, ca. 3rd cent. BCE), which all mean „the beginning“: 元 *yuan* (calligraphy by Su Shi 蘇軾, 1037–1101), 始 *shi* (calligraphy by Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅, 1045–1105); 初 *chu* (calligraphy by Lu You 陸游, 1125–1210); 首 *shou* (calligraphy by Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫, 1254–1322); 肇 *zhao* (calligraphy by Mao Zedong 毛澤東, 1893–1976).

Friday, May 22 周五 5月22日



- 9:00–10:30** **Jiang Zhouwei:**
“Getting the Image” (取象) and the Beginning of Theorization in Chinese Philosophy
Niels Weidtmann:
Beginning Without Beginning. A Phenomenological Reflection
10:30–11:00 Coffee break
11:00–12:30 **Thomas Sattig:**
The Beginning of Time
Achim Mittag:
The Beginning of Time in Chinese Thought
12:30–14:00 Lunch break
14:00–15:30 **Dai Haiqiang:**
The Origin of Normativity: Pattern, Primitive Normativity, and Rule-Following
Sebastian Cabezas:
The Problem of the Beginning at the Dawn of German Idealism
Some Remarks on Reinhold's Foundationalist Programme
15:30–16:00 Spätzle soup
16:00–17:30 **Liang Yibin:**
A New Reading of Kant's Proof of the Causal Principle
Jonas Hodel:
Ryle and Fichte on Where Thoughts Begin
18:00–20:00 Keynote Speech (followed by a reception at Alte Aula)
Johannes Brachtendorf:
Poetry and “the Other Beginning” of Philosophy – Heidegger's Interpretation of Hölderlin's Hymns

Sunday, May 24 周日 5月24日



- 8:30** Common breakfast
10:00 Transfer to Stuttgart
11:15 Visit of Mercedes-Benz Museum
13:00 Farewell Luncheon at Ochs'n Willi Restaurant (Kleiner Schlossplatz)
14:15 Walk over to Stuttgart Main Station
14:52 BNU delegation departure to Paris

