

Reports of Members' Activities

International Symposium: Commonality and Regionality in the Cultural Heritage of East Asia

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The international symposium Commonality and Regionality in the Cultural Heritage of East Asia was held at Barnard College from May 9 to 10, 2009. Hosts of the event included Barnard College's Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Cultures, Columbia University's Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, and Kansai University's Institute for Cultural Interaction Studies. Sponsors included the Donald Keene Center of Japanese Culture at Columbia University, the International Shinto Foundation, the Institute for Japanese Culture Studies at Zhejiang Gongshang University, and many other institutions.

The various peoples of East Asia have interacted over an extensive period of time, creating a cultural heritage with common aspects and regional differences. The conference examined these attributes from a multidimensional academic perspective. The conference brought together scholars interested in the East Asian cultural sphere from Japan, the United States, China, Taiwan, Canada, Great Britain, Korea, Italy, and other countries of the world. The languages used as media of communication were Japanese and English. About eighty people participated in the two-day event. The following is a brief summary of the conference.

In the first keynote-speech session, Benjamin Elman of Princeton University gave the keynote speech "Sinophiles and Sinophobes: Politics, Classicism, and Medicine in Tokugawa Japan." Kate Wildman Nakai of Sophia University served as commentator. Professor Elman explained the various complex aspects of Sino-Japanese relations in the Meiji period,

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including how the adoption of Chinese medicine in Japan provided further impetus for Japanese interest in Dutch Learning and early modern Western medicine. The second speaker of the first keynote-speech session was Huang Chun-chieh of Taiwan University, who discussed “The ‘Contextual Turn’ in the Interpretation of the Canon of Chinese Classics within the History of East Asian Cultural Exchange: Models and Questions.” Conrad Schirokauer of Columbia University served as commentator. Professor Huang discussed reinterpretations of the Chinese classical canon when transmitted to other cultures, focusing on how interpretations caused resistance when thoughts and values came into contact with other cultures, evolved, and produced new interpretations.

Two panel discussions were also held on the first day of the conference. The first panel was on sharing language. David Laurie of Columbia University served as moderator. There were four panel members. Aldo Tollini of Ca’Foscari University in Venice gave a talk titled “Chinese Linguistic Heritage in Japan.” Chen Xiaofa of Zhejiang Gongshang University spoke on “Homographs with Different Meaning: Chinese and Japanese Expressions in Sakugen Shūryō’s Travel Diary to Ming China.” Masuda Chikako of Kansai University discussed “East Asia in Early Modern and Modern Japanese Literature.” And Timothy John Wixted of Arizona State University spoke on “The Kanshi [Chinese Poetry] of Mori Ōgai: Allusion and Diction.” Members of the panel thus discussed issues that arise when divergent language structures and lexicons cross borders, the modification and creation of Chinese characters by the Japanese, and the influence of Chinese literature on Japanese writers during the Meiji and Showa periods and authors’ personal revolutions.

The second panel was on sharing Buddhism. The moderator was Michael Como of Columbia University. There were three panel members. Wang Yong of Zhejiang Gongshang University spoke on the “Monk Jianzhen and the Cult of Buddhist Relics.” Abe Ryūichi of Harvard University gave his talk on “What Five Chinese Portraits Did in Early Heian Japan.” And Yoshihara Hiroto of Waseda University presented a talk titled “About Chōnen’s Letter to Emperor Taizong of the Song Preserved in the ‘Japan’ Section of the *History of the Song*.” This panel thus took up the riddle of the monk Jianzhen’s mission to Japan, the historical background and significance of ritual performance, and cultural interaction as seen in the Japan section of the *History of the Song*. Questions and answers covered the issue of whether cultural transformations are affected by the level of education and cultivation of culture. The lively discussion developed along interesting lines.

The roundtable discussion was moderated by Wang Yong of Zhejiang Gongshang University. There were five participants. Song Xingwu of

Zhejiang Gongshang University discussed holism and individualism in ancient China. Noma Haruo of Kansai University talked about Hue from a periphery approach. Kumano Takeshi of Kansai University spoke on the UNESCO world heritage site in Ifugao. Jun Sung-kon of Korea University gave a presenta-



tion on discussing regionality and commonality in East Asia. And Xiao Xia of Shandong University discussed romanticism in the Cao Yu's *Tuibian* (The Metamorphosis) and the author's gaze. The efforts of members of Kansai University's Institute for Cultural Interaction Studies who have focused on the periphery-area project in Hue, Vietnam, were reflected in the panel discussion presented by Kansai University. Panel members discussed the state of East Asian cultural interaction in the region of Hue, which has been recognized as a world heritage site. The Kansai University team is involved in the analysis of important new Hue manuscript discoveries, which are becoming a global topic.

On the second day of the conference, May 10, there was a second keynote-speech session. Peter Kornicki of Cambridge University discussed "Translation, Vernacularization, and the Loss of Universality in East Asia." The commentator was Haruo Shirane of Columbia University. In his discussion of the impact of translation upon the process of vernacularization and the gradual disappearance of commonality, Professor Kornicki examined conduct books for women and Buddhist texts.

The second speaker of the session was Professor Shen Guowei of Kansai University. His topic was titled "New Wisdom from Scholars of Dutch Studies and Protestant Missionaries: The Potential of Kanji for the Reception of Foreign Culture." The commentator was Wang Chun of Zhejiang University. Professor Shen gave examples from dictionaries and encyclopedias written by Robert Morrison and Matteo Ricci. He explained the process of recognizing new concepts and the difficulties of symbolic representation in the transmission of knowledge and reception of foreign culture. He also examined the importance of a common writing system of Chinese characters in the East Asian cultural sphere.

Two panel discussions on May 10 were a continuation of the first two panel discussions of the previous day. The third panel discussion focused on

the sharing of classics. The moderator was Li Feng of Columbia University. There were four speakers. Kōno Kimiko of Waseda University gave a talk titled “Legacy and Development of the Canon of Chinese Classics: Reception of the *Classic of Changes* in Ancient Japan.” Wiebke Denecke of Barnard College presented “Academic Exercises: Digesting the Chinese Classics on Poetic Occasions in Ancient Japan.” Kate Wildman Nakai of Sophia University spoke on “The Vicissitudes of Kings Tang and Wu in Tokugawa Japan.” And Joshua Fogel of York University in Canada discussed “The Gold Seal and the Debate in the Late Edo Period.” Panel discussions thus ranged from the Japanese reception of the *Classic of Changes*, Japanese poems on topics from the Chinese classics, the evolution of Confucianism in Japan, and the debate in Edo Japan on the gold seal given by the Han emperor Guangwu to the king of Na in 57 C.E.

The fourth-panel members’ discussions centered on shared perceptions of taste. The moderator was Sen Sōoku, tea master and fifteenth-generation heir to the Mushakōji Senke School of Tea and special advisor for cultural exchange, 2008–2009. There were three participants. Kuriyama Shigehisa of Harvard University spoke on “East Asia and the Archaeology of Modern Taste.” Zhang Jianli of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences discussed “The Way of Tea and the Tea Ceremony in East Asia.” And Matthew McKelway of Columbia University talked about “Yang Guifei in Japan: The Visual Afterlives of a Tang Romance.” This panel thus delved into the origins of culinary taste preferences in East Asia, the common cultural heritage of tea, and the representation of a Chinese consort in Japanese painting.

The symposium thus covered a variety of genres, from language, literature, philosophy, history, the visual arts, and the arts in general to religion, cultural anthropology, geography, and culture. It also ranged over a vast temporal span, encompassing ancient to early modern times. The conference provided significant insights into the processes of transmission and reception of culture and the ensuing cultural transformations and formulations. Hence, participants could deepen their understanding of the commonalities in East Asian cultural interactions. The symposium will serve as an important springboard for the second annual meeting of the Society for Cultural Interaction in East Asia.

Report on the International Convention of Asia Scholars 6

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ICAS 6: The Largest Gathering of Asia Scholars

The International Convention of Asia Scholars 6 (ICAS 6) was successfully held in Daejeon, South Korea, from August 6 to 9, 2009. The conference proved to be one of the largest gatherings of Asia scholars to update on and discuss developments in the field. ICAS 6 was made possible through the efforts of Chungnam National University, the Center for Asian Regional Studies, and the city of Daejeon. Daejeon was the ideal venue for ICAS 6, since it merges culture, tradition, and a long colorful history with leading research in science and technology.

First held in 1998 in Leiden, Netherlands, ICAS was organized to create a transatlantic dialogue between the Association for Asian Studies (AAS), in the United States, and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), in Europe. From the Netherlands it went to Berlin in 2001, Singapore in 2003, Shanghai in 2005, and Kuala Lumpur in 2007. Attracting delegates and participants from more than fifty countries in 2009, ICAS has indeed come a long way.

One of the goals of this convention is to transcend boundaries of disciplines, nation-states, and citizenship. The interests of ICAS are similar to those of the Institute for Cultural Interaction Studies (ICIS) of Kansai University.

This year's overarching theme was "Think Asia!" ICAS 6 boasted a total of 178 sessions on various multidisciplinary topics. Subthemes ranged from "Security Issues in Asia," "Gender and Globalization," "Labor Migration," and "Russian-Japanese Relations and East Asia," to "Aspects of Islam," "Colonialism in Asia," and "Manga Studies." Because of the great number of concurrent panels and sessions, it was impossible to attend even a tenth of them. This report presents some of sessions that I attended during the conference.

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Sessions on Cultural Interaction

Of particular interest to me was the phenomenon of cultural hybridity on the interface of diverse cultures. The session titled “Northeast Asia in Motion: The Social and Cultural Dimensions of Regional Migration” presented several aspects of migrant literature. The panel convened by Tessa Morris-Suzuki, a prominent Australian social historian, discussed how migrant identities are constructed and changed through expression in literature. The panel titled “The Embedding of Asian and Muslim Migrants in Asia and the West,” presented by graduate students, reported on the cultural dimension of migration. Notable presentations in this panel were that of Zai-Nichi Korean (Korean residents of Japan) and of Hmong migrants in the U.S. Both studies utilized comprehensive fieldwork to analyze the interaction of different cultures on the level of individuals. They also illustrated the variety of hybrid identities formed by immigrants living in host societies. In the panel “Family, Hybridity, and National Identity in the Malaysian Region,” three cases of Chinese and Indian migrant families in Malaysia were discussed. The presentations demonstrated the hybrid dispositions of migrant families in the political, cultural, and social spheres. The papers presented in these sessions reflect the very core of the program of the Institute for Cultural Interaction Studies: understanding cultural interactions in East Asia.

The ICIS Panel: The Potentiality of the Peripheral Approach

“The Potentiality of the Peripheral Approach in the Study of Cultural Interaction in East Asia,” the institution panel of the ICIS, presented perspectives in the analysis of various dimensions of cultural interaction, in particular, cultural interaction between the center and periphery, as well as the relationship between the center and periphery. The peripheral approach is a featured project of the ICIS program. It focuses on cultures formerly recognized as peripheral and aims at breaking away from history focused on the individual nation. Though striking, it is still an emerging approach.

Before the presentation proper, Yoshiko Oda, the panel chair, introduced the basic plan of the session. The session sought to highlight different interdisciplinary fields, such as Chinese history, anthropology, and religious studies. Since the term “periphery” has various meanings in terms of relationships between self and others, she then presented key concepts for analyzing these relationships, including nation-states and pre-nation-states, the strategy of the periphery, and the periphery as represented by the other. Next she emphasized that “periphery” is always defined in relation to the center or the imagined center. Finally, she noted that by pursuing existing issues, we can transcend history focused on the individual nation.

The panel showcased four interesting papers. Takao Fujita investigated

the cultural and political strategies of an artificial immigrant community along the Hexi Corridor of the Gansu province during the Han dynasty. The essence of his presentation was that immigrants along the Hexi Corridor preferred to maintain prominent peripheral position, and to depend on the central Han Dynasty, to preserve ties with the center. A paper by Hiromichi Okamoto analyzed the formation of the Ryukyu Kingdom. Along with changes in trade commodities in both external and internal societies, Ryukyu maintained a peripheral position as a dual tributary state to both China and Japan. Hideyuki Onishi examined the cultural transformation of the Ainu in Hokkaido under Japanese colonization. Under Japanese colonial policy, the Ainu in the Kamikawa Basin were removed from their original habitat and resettled on reservations without the consideration of their subethnicities. As a result, their important rituals were entirely transformed. Finally, Mizuka Kimura studied identity formation in Chinese Muslims in Myanmar. One notable phenomenon of these Chinese Muslims is that they inscribe on their tombstones Panglong, a place in Myanmar, as their native town, though they recognize that they came from Yunnan province.

After each presentation, scholars of various disciplines but with common interests participated in healthy discussions. Not only did the panel presentation highlight the endeavor of the Institute for Cultural Interaction Studies; it also facilitated building and broadening connections among fellow Asia scholars during the event. The panel presentation was a wonderful addition to the laurels of the Institute for Cultural Interaction Studies, and the conference overall was a great success.

