

24th World Congress of Philosophy 2018

Society Sessions organized by International Association of Japanese Philosophy (IAJP)

PHILOSOPHY OF PILGRIMAGE AND JAPANESE CULTURE

(C 070020 IAJP)

August 18 9:00am – 10:50am

Room 401, China National Convention Center

Moderator: Chinping Liao

Speakers: Gereon Kopf, Keiichi Noe, Cheung Ching Yuen

Presentation 1

Title:

Self-cultivation and cognitive transformation: notes towards a philosophy of pilgrimage

Presenter:

Gereon KOPF

Affiliation:

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ABSTRACT

The Japanese philosopher Yasuo Yuasa developed a philosophy of self-cultivation from Daoist and Buddhist sources. According to him, the central characteristics of self cultivation (修行) are the frequent and persistent repetition of short physical exercises--"forms"--over a long period of time, a cognitive transformation in three steps engendered by these physical exercises, and a resulting new understanding of the world. Given this definition, pilgrimages, especially, multi-site pilgrimages such as the 88 places of Shikoku, the 34 places of Chichibu, or the 36 places of Tohoku easily qualify as self-cultivation.

In my paper, I will explore how pilgrimages thus understood as forms of self-cultivation not only have philosophical import but that they can also be understood, to some degree, as

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philosophical, practice. Specifically, this paper will show how multi-site pilgrimages can function as forms of self-cultivation, engender a cognitive transformation, and can be integrated into philosophical practices and discourses.

Focusing on the three above-mentioned Buddhist pilgrimages in Japan, this paper will apply Yuasa's theory of self-cultivation to the practice of pilgrimage and show how these pilgrimages are designed to engender a cognitive transformation. In the second step, I will offer an example of how such a pilgrimage can be incorporated into philosophical discourses that focus on cognitive transformation and the analysis of various world views. Thus, this paper will expand our understanding of both philosophy and pilgrimage and help us create cultural practices of philosophy, in the sense of Peter Sloterdijk's suggestion to understand philosophy as "Uebung."

Presentation 2

Title:

Fudo (風土) and Uta-makura (歌枕) : Basho's The Narrow Road to Oku revisited

Presenter:

NOE Keiichi

Affiliation:

Tohoku University, Japan

ABSTRACT

The great Japanese Haiku-poet Matsuo Basho started his journey to Oku, the northern part of Japan in May 1689 in the Edo period. According to Donald Keene, "Of the five travel diaries describing his journeys, the last, *Oku no Hosomichi*, written in 1689, is not only the best but is considered one of the major texts of classical Japanese literature." Basho had two specific purposes on this journey. One is to make a pilgrimage to Hiraizumi after 500 years of the fall of the Fujiwara family. The other is to visit a lot of Uta-makura, which literally means a pillow of *tanka* poetry, but exactly means a place of poetical association. There are many such places in the north-east district of Japan next to Kinki district. "For centuries one of the chief reasons that

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Japanese had for travel was to see uta-makura, places that are mentioned in poetry, and this probably was Basho's ultimate reason for making long journey."

For Basho visiting uta-makura is no other than following footprints of ancestors like Sogi, Saigyō or Tu Fu in China and commemorating them. Uta-makura is a place of collective literary tradition which invokes historical and environmental memories. In such a sense, Fudo and uta-makura are inseparable and unified. As is well known, Watsuji Tetsuro wrote in the beginning of *Fudo*, "the aim of this book is to elucidate Fudo-ness as the structural moment of human existence." Needless to say, Fudo must not be identified with natural environment. It is not an object of scientific inquiry. Fudo includes various relations with subjective human life, i.e. lived experiences or the life-world in Husserlian sense. In other words, as Augustin Berque pointed out, Fudo exists between subject and object. Therefore, we must say that uta-makuras are indispensable part of Fudo, which composed of both natural aspect and cultural aspect. In the case of Fudo, natural environment is surrounded by cultural and historical narratives.

Donald Keene said: "He [Basho] was, of course, highly sensitive to the beauty of nature, but he also describe with warmth the people he met on the way, and the past, no less than the present, was always with him." From this passage, we realized that Basho's description includes both admiring natural landscape and appreciating human activities, in short deeply takes root in each Fudo. Therefore, Basho's small book *Oku no Hosomichi* still now inspired not only Japanese but also foreigners to new pilgrimage in Japan.

Presentation 3

Title:

Basho's visit to the North and the Philosophy of Pilgrimage

Presenter:

CHEUNG Ching-yuen

Affiliation:

Chinese University of Hong Kong

ABSTRACT

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In his book, *Tohoku Studies / The forgotten Tohoku* (2009), Akasaka Norio mentioned Matsuo Basho's short stay in Ichiburi. In this small town, as written in *Oku no Hosomichi*, Basho met two young women who are on a pilgrimage to the Ise Shrine. Next morning, they asked if they can follow Basho's way to avoid danger, but he rejected. According to Akasaka, Basho might have actually met two prostitutes in Ichiburi, but they were merely convenient objects for his *haiku* writing. In other words, Basho did not see them as persons. Also, Basho has little interest in Tohoku (North East of Japan) except *utamakura* (歌枕), i.e. places associated with classic literature. Akasaka suggests Basho's trip can be regarded as "a journey of *utamakura*," and the imaginative principle of Basho's journey is nothing but the "romanticism about the margins" (辺境へのロマン主義).

For example, Basho visited Kusakata and Matsushima. He writes, "As if being spirited away, Basho targets the north. However, the northern limits of Basho's journey are Hiraizumi in Iwate Prefecture and Kusakata in Akita Prefecture. He did not visit the inner part of Tohoku. . . In any case, Basho is precisely a traveler-poet who goes from the capital (都) to the margin." Margin is always seen from a center. In Basho's case, Tohoku is seen through the eyes from the capital. Asakura urges us to understand Tohoku from a Tohoku perspective, and farewell to Basho's romanticism. That is, to visit places where Basho did not visit, or has never thought of making a visit.

I will introduce my pilgrimage to a temple in Arahama, Sendai City. This temple was washed away by tsunami in the Great East Japan Earthquake in 11 March 2011. Pilgrimage is usually related to visits to famous religious sites, but following the insight from Watsuji's pilgrimage to ancient temples in Nara, I argue that pilgrimage is to visit sites that are forgotten; in other words, to visit sites not even mentioned in tourist guides or mass media. In this sense, pilgrimage can be regarded as a practical way of doing philosophy. This philosophy is to preserve memories and share historical pain, and to remember the forgotten people and the death.