The Oriental Club of Philadelphia

Regional Symposium
Apr 18, 2015
9:00 am
Temple University

WELCOME

The Oriental Club of Philadelphia, an academic society founded in 1888, is one of the oldest continuously running organizations of its kind in the United States. In recent times, the OC has organized regular lectures, conferences, and symposia to assemble the Asian Studies community from throughout the tri-state region. All scholars, advanced graduate students, and library/museum professionals of Asian Studies (including East, South, Southeast, Central Asia, and the Near East) in the region are cordially invited to join the club and participate in our activities.

Dr. Douglas Duckworth, President
Mr. Steve Lang, Secretary/Treasurer
Dr. Frank Chance, Archivist
Dr. C. Pierce Salguero, Webmaster

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KEYNOTE

David McMahan, Franklin & Marshall College
How to Think About Buddhist Meditation: Taxonomies of the Lifeworld and Practices of the Self

PANEL A

Pierce Salguero, Pennsylvania State University, Abington
Encounters with Buddhism & Healing in Contemporary Thailand

I will present an overview of an ongoing ethnographic project researching the nexus of Buddhism and healing in Thailand. I will introduce a handful of healers and institutional settings from northern and central Thailand that have been subjects of my field study and participant observation over the past 18 years. I will focus on how Theravada Buddhist ideas, rituals, and other practices play a central role in contemporary healing, but also will touch on their role in medical lineages, regional identities, and the negotiation of modernity.

Adam Valerio, Temple University
The Psychologized Self in Contemporary Japanese Buddhism

Despite much literature on Buddhist contributions to psychotherapy, both in the West and in East Asia, less attention has been dedicated to the influence of the psychoanalytic gaze in the creation of new manifestations of Buddhism. This talk proposes one research framework aimed at determining ways in which the psychoanalytic lens has shaped Japanese Buddhist notions of self-identity (i.e., one’s sense of self) and its associated issues, including the social dynamics that underlie this extension of institutionalized psychology into the outside domain of religion. Examples include transformed understandings of the mechanics of rebirth and the salvific endeavor more broadly.

Andrew Gardner, Temple University
Dölpopa’s “other-emptiness”

Dölpopa Shérap Gyaltsen, a fourteenth century Tibetan master, was an early proponent of the Shentong (gzhan stong) view of “other-emptiness.” The Shengtong philosophical position maintains that while ultimate reality is empty of conventional existence, i.e., all phenomena that are dependent upon causes and conditions, ultimate reality is not empty of itself. The position that ultimate reality is empty, but not empty of its own existence can be contrasted with the Prasangika view advanced by Je Tsongkhapa. In this presentation, I will outline Dölpopa’s view of other-emptiness contrasting it to the Prasangika view of self-emptiness advanced by Tsongkhapa.

Charlotte Moore, Temple University
Nishida Kitarō’s Philosophy of Place
This presentation is an inquiry into Nishida Kitaro’s philosophy of place (basho), its relationship to nothingness, and its possible implications for a non-dual approach to epistemology. I will begin with a brief discussion of the three ‘layers’ in Nishida’s hierarchy of implacement and how they may be understood in relationship to his conception of nothingness. I will then speculate as to how these ideas lay the groundwork for what may be termed a nondual theory of knowledge.

Hsiao-Wen Cheng, University of Pennsylvania
Rethinking the Yijian zhi, a Twelfth-Century Chinese Anecdotal Collection

Yijian zhi is a collection of contemporary anecdotes compiled by Hong Mai (1123-1202) volume-by-volume during the last forty years of his life, a product of the unprecedented social and economical developments during the Southern Song. With its extremely diverse stories, Yijian zhi has been an invaluable source for studying aspects of Song society and culture that are otherwise unseen in most elite writings. Scholars’ uses of it, however, are by no means uniform. It is still under debate, for instance, what roles Hong Mai plays in his work—as a curious listener, a creative writer, a skillful storyteller, an active editor only in the disguise of “faithful recording,” or more. Whether or not, and to what extent, do Hong Mai’s records reflect the voice of those other than himself and his elite circle? How do we situate Yijian zhi in Chinese literary tradition? How would a reconsideration of the authorship, the genre, and the linguistic and narrative style of Yijian zhi shed new light on its uses in studying history?

Tom Berendt, Temple University
Reclaiming the Sacred Cow: Adopting Gandhian Ecology & Bovine Veneration in the Creation of an Earth Ethic

In the creation of an Earth Ethic should we consider the veneration of the bovine? Mahatma Gandhi emphatically argued that the significance of bovine veneration and protection was central in ensuring human prosperity, as through the cow humankind connects to the entire “sub-human world.” As he asserts in Young India, “man through the cow is enjoined to realize his identity with all that lives.” Therefore, as a hallmark of Gandhian Ecology, the cow represents both the human responsibility to protect and act non-violently towards the Earth. In our attempt to salvage our crumbling relationship with the Earth do we therefore need to reconsider our relationship with the bovine?
**PANEL B**

**Adrian Tiethof-Aronson, Temple University**
*Electronic Mandala Method*

Manuscripts relating to Avalokiteśvara’s maṇḍala creation found in Dunhuang pose intriguing questions about transmission and sacred space not previously explored by scholars. A digital edition of one of these manuscripts can contain information collated from various sources. It can be used to display an electronic version of text in its original form and a regularized version for modern audiences, including supplied text to account for a manuscript’s damage where legibility is a problem, providing a more comprehensive resource in manuscript research for future investigations in a broad area of study. This talk will show how a manuscript can be digitally realized.

**Marcus Bingenheimer, Temple University**
*On the Production of High-End Digital Editions of Dunhuang Manuscripts*

Facsimile editions of Dunhuang manuscripts have become widely available in microfilm, print and in digital format. The next step is to produce full text editions of these texts that will allow them to be queried, analyzed and visualized in various ways. Relatively few texts have been critically edited, and these editions are generally not available digitally. The presentation will try to address some of the issues involved in the production of high-end digital editions of a small number of Chinese Buddhist texts. The aim is to create critical editions according to international standards that are computationally accessible and platform independent.

**Tim Connolly, East Stroudsburg University**
*Language and the Comparative Interpretation of Confucian Ethics*

Chinese-Western comparative ethics has seen a battle between two competing ways of understanding early Confucian philosophy in a global context. The first, more dominant approach is to see thinkers like Confucius and Mencius as focused on the cultivation of a good character, like Aristotle and other Western virtue ethicists. Yet this virtue ethical Confucianism has come under criticism from proponents of “Confucian Role Ethics” for neglecting what they take to be the distinctively Confucian emphasis on human interdependence. In this presentation I will look at the distinctive claims about language that motivate each approach to early Confucian texts.

**Dennis Stromback, Temple University**
*Are Religious Experiences Inherently Ideological?*

Within social theory, the category of religion has been for the most part casted as ideological—this idea that religious experiences are disguises of other real material interests. We can even see this with the treatment of the Kyoto school in religious studies, literary circles, and philosophy: that is, many have leaned towards the Marxist critique in the assessment of whether or not the Kyoto school bears any
philosophical weight. However, the problem with such an approach is that it has failed to make visible its own socio-philosophical biases—perhaps its Oriental bias. If we want to understand the relationship between ideology and religion, namely the Kyoto school, then we might have to consider a different methodological approach, an approach that does not resuscitate the violence of orientalism.

Bert Beynen, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Temple University

*Georgian Theories of Friendship*

Shota Rustaveli’s epic poem *The Man in the Panther Skin* (MPS), written in Georgia, in the Caucasus, around 1200 A.D., provides Georgian society with role models and many quotations and proverbs, like the works of Shakespeare and the Bible in English-speaking societies. The MPS is especially influential in friendship and love, where it is generally supposed to adhere to Plato’s and Aristotle’s theories. In this paper the actual behavior of the MPS heroes is analyzed as stages of a teacher-pupil relation, which is shown to be closer to Neoplatonism than to Plato’s and Aristotle’s original theories.

**PANEL C**

Minjung Noh, Temple University

*Confluence and Conflicts among Religions in the late-19th Century Korea: Early Korean Protestants’ portrayal of other religions*

The religious landscape of Korea in the late 19th century shows us a complex coexistence of religions. This presentation will have a look at it by reading contemporary readers’ columns which appear on contemporary Christian Newspapers in Korea. Written from early Korean Protestant perspectives—especially methodists and presbyterians— the narratives in columns take critical viewpoints on other religions: Catholicism, Buddhism, and local shamanism. I will investigate instances which show interesting interaction and conflicts between religions listed above. Under the collapsing confucian government, the dominant cultural norm—Confucianism—was at stake as Western powers exerted their political and cultural influence in Korea. Understanding themselves as having Western, and ‘civilized’ religion and mentality, early Korean Christians have distinctive views on other religious groups at that time. I will argue that through the lens of these early Christians, we can distill historical evidence on the religious topography of Korea at that time.

Paul Reagan, Temple University

*Diplomacy of Defiance: Sugihara “Senpo” and the Rescue of European Jews in World War II*
I hope to examine what led Sugihara Chiune, a Japanese diplomat, to defy the dictates of his superiors in Tokyo as well as the threat of the Nazis and Soviet communists. Why did Japan have a consulate in Lithuania? How did Japan strategically place itself in view of its interests in China and Manchuria? What was the perception of the Jewish people in Japan? And, fundamentally what inspired this young diplomat to save the lives of thousands of Jewish people? I shall refer to the diaries of Sugihara and the 14 volumes of records spared destruction in the “Bonfire of the Bureaucrats.” Finally, what happened to Sugihara and his family as a result of his heroism and defiance of the policies and attitudes of his superiors in Japan?

Mark McNicholas, Pennsylvania State University, Altoona College
*Deception and its Times: A Political Imposture Case in Qing China*

In 1786 a wandering ex-convict persuaded two commoners that he was a noble scion and high official named “Fu Tianbao,” sent by the emperor to spy on the Muslims of Gansu. Cheating his victims out of money, clothing, and a horse, he dispatched them to Beijing with bogus letters and promises of official position. These deceptions targeted common people but reflected the high politics of the late Qianlong period, when the monarch was elevating loyal intimates to help him control the bureaucracy, pacify the frontiers, and suppress rebellions. The imposture matched a new configuration of political power at the center.

Kin Cheung, Temple University
*The Relevance of Fazang’s Philosophical Theories for Contemporary Neuroscience*

The dialogue between Buddhism and Science have focused mainly on: 1) the surface compatibility between the two; 2) the scientific research on Buddhist-based meditation practices; and 3) the cooperation between them towards a science of the mind, or a contemplative science. In the third area, there have been growing efforts to bring Buddhist philosophy into conversation with cognitive science. I argue that looking at Fazang’s mereology and theory of causation contributes to the third and second areas of the dialogue. Fazang’s philosophical models can be used as a bridge between a localized and holistic assortative functional model of the brain.

Douglas Duckworth, Temple University
*Dignāga’s Idealism*

From fifth-century India, Dignāga sheds light on the problem in terms of: (1) the relation between extended things and what is not extended, and (2) the relationship between mind and matter. For the first problem, Dignāga echoes Vasubandhu’s argument in the Twenty Stanzas (Viṃśatikā) that extended objects cannot be constituted by indivisible particles that lack extension. The second problem—the relationship not between macro-objects and micro-objects, but between cognition and matter—is known as the “hard problem” of consciousness. It is a version of the mind-body problem that addresses the
question: how can experience arise from matter, which does not share its nature? This problem is set up by the presumptions of a mental-physical dualism, but can be answered with monism. Dignāga’s answer is not, however, a physicalist monism (which is left with an explanatory gap), but rather the monism of psychicalism, or panpsychism.