

Workshop on the World Philosophy

This workshop brings together different strands of world philosophy, which sometimes receive less attention than they deserve, with the aim of connecting the insights from multifaceted perspectives to shed new light on the original issues in their own fields as well as on relevant topics in other traditions. This event is jointly organized by the Smart WE Project of the JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) and the CAPE (Center for Applied Philosophy and Ethics) at the Graduate School of Letters, Kyoto University.

Date: Saturday, January 13, 2024 (1:30 pm – 5:15 pm)

Venue: Basement Meeting Room, Shiran-kaikan Annex (芝蘭会館別館 地下会議室)

➤ <http://www.shirankai.or.jp/e/facilities/access/index.html>

Program

Time	Speaker	Title
1:30 – 1:35		Opening Remark by Yasuo Deguchi
1:35 – 2:25	Rein Raud	The Desert Island Revisited: Contours of a Relational Ontology
2:25 – 3:15	Yuichiro Tsujiguchi	Being and World in Dōgen’s Shōbōgenzō —In comparison with Markus Gabriel—
3:15 – 3:35		Break
3:35 – 4:25	Hsun-Mei Chen	Jizang on Silence: Beyond Linguistic Interpretations
4:25 – 5:15	Felipe Cuervo Restrepo	Stories that Live By Us: Narrative Ethics and Animism

Each slot consists of **25 mins presentation**, **20 mins Q&A**, and 5 mins break.

Organizers:

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Kazuhiro Watanabe (Kyoto University)

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Abstracts

The Desert Island Revisited: Contours of a Relational Ontology

Rein Raud (School of Humanities, Tallinn University)

Abstract: During recent and ongoing ontological debates, both traditional and upgraded object-centred ontologies are being challenged by a new ontological paradigm that privileges processes, relations and fields over distinct “things”, which can be exhaustively characterized by a list of essential and accidental properties and which pre-exist any relations they might enter into. However, although relational ontologies have been successfully put to practical use in critical and social theory, relatively few attempts have been made to outline a more rigorous and comprehensive ontological discourse that would go beyond the level of mere philosophical intuitions. Using the metaphors drawn from a famous question — when a tree is felled by the wind on a desert island, is there a sound? — my talk will make an effort in that direction, tentatively engaging with a number of philosophers from different ages and traditions.

Being and World in Dōgen’s Shōbōgenzō —In comparison with Markus Gabriel—

Yuichiro Tsujiguchi

Abstract: This paper intends to propose the advantage of Dōgen’s Buddha-Nature theory over Markus Gabriel’s ontology with respect to tackling global issues such as environmental destruction, collapse of public nature, etc.

Gabriel asserts in his book *Why the World Does Not Exist* (WW) that the world does not exist. His assertion is based on the following propositions: 1. Fields of sense are the places where everything appears. 2. Existence is the circumstance that something appears in a field of sense (WW50). These two propositions intend to replace the modern worldview of “the universe that encompasses everything” and “objects that are in the universe” with “variety of fields of sense” and “objects that appear in the fields”. Adding to that, to understand these two propositions, we also need to focus on the third proposition: 3. A SENSE is then the way in which an object appears (WW69). This is because 3. indicates Gabriel’s “sense” is based on the “Sinn” defined by Frege. However, there is an important difference between Gabriel and Frege. By connecting this proposition to 2., Gabriel reduces the distinction between Sinn und Bedeutung to only one side of Sinn and grasps Sinn as an object. From this perspective, our lifeworld and the domain of the natural science that deals with atoms are two independent domains that are equally qualified and

there is no world that encompasses them, and there are no objects that penetrate different domains.

Turning to Dōgen's side, he preaches in *Sansui Kyō* fascicle in *Shōbōgenzō* that "Although we may say there is water of various types, it would seem there is no original water, no water of various types." Just at a glance, this assertion seems the same as Gabriel's pluralistic worldview. However, Dōgen presents an additional view, i.e., the practice of looking at water from the water's perspective. He describes this view, "here is a study of water seeing water. Water practices and verifies water." If we want to position this view inside Gabriel's ontology, it can be compared with Gabriel's statement in WW, "the property that an object is identical to itself is terribly uninteresting and unhelpful" (WW62). However, "study of water seeing water" is not identical to the meaningless "an object is identical to itself". This is because the practice involves breaking free from bondages of the fields of sense that compose our daily lifeworld, and going to or returning from the outsides. In other words, the study of water seeing water is finding the water to be a route that accesses the different domains and fields, from the human lifeworld to material worlds and representational spaces. Dōgen's Buddha-Nature is nothing less than this function, and through it we can find the multiple domains that Gabriel cannot penetrate.

Jizang on Silence: Beyond Linguistic Interpretations

Hsun-Mei Chen (Kyoto University)

Abstract: This paper explores the philosophical insights of Jizang, a key figure in the Chinese Buddhist Sanlun tradition, particularly focusing on his interpretation of silence. At the heart of this exploration is Jizang's commentary on the silence of Vimalakīrti, a renowned figure in East Asian Buddhism. Jizang perceives Vimalakīrti's silence not as a mere absence of speech, but as a non-linguistic Xiang (相), implying that it embodies an experience that goes beyond the realm of verbal expression. This perspective elevates silence to a pedagogical tool for tentatively representing reality, differentiating it from conventional linguistic silence. Further, the paper delves into Jizang's concept of 'Dependence' (待), a foundational idea in his philosophy. Jizang employs this concept to illustrate the interconnectedness and oneness of all concepts, including the interplay between silence and words. Through this lens, he argues for a fundamental unity that transcends apparent differences, thereby addressing the non-dual relationship between silence and words. In the end, this paper aims to offer a resolution to the seeming tension in Jizang's philosophy - the dichotomy and unity of silence and words.

Keywords: Jizang, Vimalakīrti, Xiang, dependence

Stories that Live By Us: Narrative Ethics and Animism

Felipe Cuervo Restrepo (Kyoto University)

Abstract: In the last decade or so, the Colombian Constitutional Court has emitted several sentences declaring natural phenomena (for example, rivers, mountains, and jungles) subjects of right, and claiming that this position follows from the way in which these same entities are regarded by “ancestral cosmovisions” (that is to say, the worldview of the indigenous peoples of Colombia). The Court, though, does not explain what exactly this attribution of ethical subjecthood (which might initially seem nothing but a legal sleight of hand) consists of, or why the stories in which the indigenous cosmovision is transmitted are to be regarded as true. In this presentation, I will offer a series of cases that can be taken to motivate a particular version of Narrative Ethics, and then argue that this same version both explains the importance of indigenous stories as stories and offers an explanation for the attribution of ethical subjecthood to natural phenomena.