

Newsletter No.16

**Construction of
Death and Life Studies
Concerning Value and Culture of Life**

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Toward Life and Death Studies of Local Communities

Susumu Shimazono (COE Program Chair, Faculty of Letters, Religious Studies)

Tokoro-cho, Hokkaido, facing on to the Okhotsk Sea, has a research institute affiliated to the Faculty of Letters of the University of Tokyo. Since the 1950s, this institute, Institute of Hokkaido Cultural Studies, has served as a local base for archaeological excavations and training. Thanks to the long-standing relationship with this community, the Faculty of Letters has kept giving public lectures in the town since 2000. Tokoro-cho merged with Kitami City in March 2006 to become part of the city. In commemoration of the expanded new city, the faculty had decided to have another public lecture in central Kitami City this year, in addition to the original public lecture in former Tokoro-cho. In this memorable year, a new public lecture of 21st century COE “Construction of Death and Life Studies” was held to exchange ideas with the community residents.

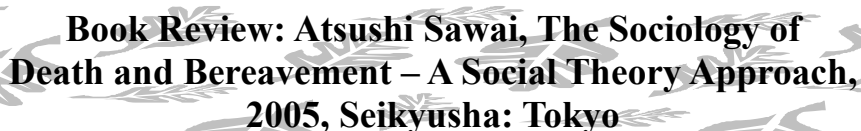
From its first meeting, the public lecture of this COE has been focusing on building up the intellectual forum for citizens in general. But the symposiums and the lecture meetings had been held almost exclusively on Tokyo University's campus, and not outside of it, since its beginning. This time, the lectures first moved out of the campus to a local community. In December, 2004, we invited the community residents to Tokyo University where we held a symposium titled “Learning from Beteru: Going Down as a Way of life,” but this time, we moved northward to Hokkaido to have the lectures before the community residents. I arrived at Memanbetsu Airport noontime on December 8th, together with Professor Kazuhisa Takahashi, the dean of the faculty and the chief of Tokoro Training Institute; and Professor Shizuo Ohnuki from Department of Archaeology. Professor Toshio Kumaki, now stationed at the Tokoro Institute, met us at the airport and drove through the snow to Tokoro-cho. On our way to the meeting, we dropped by Tokoro High School to meet with Principal Takashi Yamamoto and several officials from the town hall. We then proceeded to the town's gymnasium where the meeting would be held. At 2:00 p.m., Professor Seizo Sekine, the member of this COE project from the Department of Ethics, and I delivered a total of one-hour lectures on life and death studies seen from different viewpoints. Among the 5,000 population of Tokoro-cho, school teachers, more than 100 high school students and lots of the community residents took part in the meeting.

After a short break, we paid a visit to the Kitami City Hall to meet with Mayor Kouji Kanda and his staff, then proceeded to the Kitami City Center to have another lecture on the issue titled as “Thinking about Death and Life: an Invitation to Death and Life Studies of 21st Century COE Program” from 6:30 p.m. The meeting, which was held under the co-sponsorship of both Kitami City Board of Education and the University of Tokyo, was valued as part of “People's College of Hokkaido.” Dean Takahashi led off the meeting by delivering an opening speech full of humor before the audience of more than a hundred people. With Associated Professor Kumaki presiding, I delivered a lecture, “Modern Japanese Views of Death and Life and Their Spirituality”. Then Professor Sekine followed to have his

lecture, “Thoughts on Aging and Death”. Each lecture lasted one hour.

People today are said to be at a loss about how to face death since they do not have a firm belief any more about the itinerary of the souls after death. Still, I am confident that we have a good chance to find ways to face death and live the rest of our lives fruitfully. The humanities should accomplish remarkable achievements so that it may support people's struggle to face death, maintaining dialogues with them of their individual lives. Death and Life Studies are one of those efforts to provide a place for such dialogues. The meeting was one of our attempts to return the results of the Death and Life Studies to citizens. The audience listened attentively to us.

After the meeting, we were invited to a dinner party hosted by the Kitami-City mayor and spent a pleasant time in talking with the mayor himself and Mr. Hisatoshi Ihara, deputy mayor and the chief of Tokoro District and Mr. Koji Shiranuma, the education chief. It was past 6:00 p.m. when we left the party. Though snow had already stopped falling, the temperature had dropped ten degrees below zero. There were only a few people on the street. I could clearly remember the individual faces in the attentive audience. Although we did not have enough time to have one-on-one discussion with the people, it was one of the meaningful opportunities to appeal the results of Death and Life Studies to the local community.



Book Review: Atsushi Sawai, *The Sociology of Death and Bereavement – A Social Theory Approach*, 2005, Seikyusha: Tokyo

Noriko Nijima (DALs Special Researcher, Sociology)

The perception of death and bereavement has been subject to the whims of societal trends. In modern times, familiarity with death as it took place within one's own household or in the immediate neighborhood has been lost as part of the process of economic growth which has seen death become increasingly managed by medical practitioners and morticians, standardized, and banished from everyday life. However, counter-movements to this standardization have also appeared. Since the 1990s, the communality of traditional society through which death and bereavement could be shared with others and the concept of self-determination in regard to death have been rediscovered. Management of death by a specialist and “personalized dying” appear at first sight to be mutually exclusive concepts, but have given rise to the communality of death in a mutually complimentary fashion. Furthermore, on the occasion of deaths that occurs under problematic circumstances such as large-scale natural catastrophes and atrocities, this act of rediscovery has even extended to rediscovering an inter-human connectivity and communality in modern society.

The book under review mobilizes social theory to argue that this perception of the rediscovery of death and bereavement is a reflection of social trends. The author of this seven-chapter volume is a sociologist and has taken his own experience with bereavement as the starting point of his inquiry. Having said

this, the author's personal experiences do not constitute the focus of this work. Rather, this study seeks to - and succeeds in - locating these experiences "within the larger context of modern or contemporary society," as the introduction states. Alongside the author's previous theories, a deeply sincere attitude which reflects the author's personality can be discerned in the scholarship at hand.

In the following, I will summarize the contents of this work. The first half, made up of chapters 1 to 4, deals with death in modern and contemporary society, drawing on the many insights that have been made in social theory since the field was founded by Max Weber and Emile Durkheim and gives an easy to follow synopsis of the complicated discussion of death in sociology.

Chapter 5, "Bereavement and Social Death," reexamines death from the perspective of definitions and conceptualizations of death. Chapter 6, "Rethinking 'The Tabooization of Death,'" provides an attempt to disentangle the issue of the tabooization of death, examining who views death as a taboo when and where, and what taboos have fallen away over time. By doing so, the author seeks to provide an analysis of this as of yet unexamined issue.

Building on the discussions provided by the previous chapters, the last chapter ("The Community of Death/ The Connectivity of Life") mainly looks at the concepts of self-determination in regard to one's own death, the communality of death, and the connectivity of life. In this chapter the author elaborates on his main argument. The multiple facets of death give birth to the communal nature of death even today. However, the author suggests that to construct a "connectivity of life" through the mutual acknowledgment of differing narratives of death is preferable to seeking shared narratives of death based on such "communality." If one follows the latter approach, it is possible that the individual will be forced to choose a certain model of a standardized "good death," which might result in assimilation and exclusion.

Up to the last chapter, a large number of social theories are introduced and discussed, but all of this occurs in a clear and concise manner. This is because although the present book deals with death and bereavement, it consistently focuses on the issue of the "connectivity of life" among humans that occurs in connection with death. After all, according to the author, to think about one's death is to contemplate one's life, and to think about one's life is to reflect on one's relations to others.

However, to think about this inter-human connectivity does not constitute nostalgia for pre-modern times. In pre-modern times, religious or local communities watched over the deaths of their members and a certain meaning of death was shared by the community as a whole, but this connection has been lost in the modern era. Nowadays, the meaning of death depends on the personal beliefs of each individual, conceptions of what constitutes a death fitting to oneself differ widely, and the establishment of a common perception of death is extremely difficult. However, setting this issue aside, it has to be noted that the wish to have one's death acknowledged and understood by those around oneself has not grown weaker over time. The author argues that in regard to death a new connectivity is necessary. This connectivity of life which does not reject the other is necessary, as the author points

out, not only in order to enable people to acknowledge each other's death, but also because the meaning of life changes constantly. It has to be noted that this last point is rather abstract and seems to have been included by the author as a prospect for future inquiry.

Several months after reading Sawai's work I had the opportunity to visit a hospice as part of this COE project. I sensed on this occasion that I had discovered a place at which the theories of the author were being put into practice. At this particular hospice, the patients are not urged to die a “good death.” Instead, in case the patient had, for example, a violinist he particularly liked, the violinist was contacted by the hospice management and then appeared at the hospice “by chance.” In this way, the hospice staff is doing their utmost to enable each patient to experience a personalized process of dying. Photographs are taken of the paintings and drawings created by patients during their stay at the hospice. The patients are guaranteed that these works are displayed even after their deaths in remembrance of their lives. Simultaneously, these works also function as testimony of the patient's life and journey towards death. It can be said that thanks to this new connectivity created between the patients who come to the hospice to die and the hospice staff, the patients are enabled to add a concluding chapter to their lives and that their deaths find acknowledgment. While appearing to be extremely busy, judging from their looks of contentment it appeared as if the hospice staff also gains a sense of meaning for their own lives through their work with the hospice patients and the “connectivity of life” that exists between them. If at a hospice – a place where people go to await death – this “connectivity of life” which does not reject the other has become the fundamental driving force towards life and death for patients and staff alike, then is it not possible to claim that exactly this “connectivity of life” emphasized by Professor Sawai in his book constitutes an extremely contemporary outlook on death and bereavement.

Tübingen/Toulouse Research Trip

Susumu Shimazono (COE Program Chair, Faculty of Letters, Religious Studies)

Takashi Asao (DALs Special Researcher, Philosophy)

The morning after our arrival in Germany (September 24th) was a beautiful day. We were told that such weather was unusual for this time of year. Our tour on our first full-day consisted of a productive visit to a hospice in Stuttgart and an institute for elderly welfare (hospital, etc.), and again we were blessed with good weather.

The following day (September 26th), the day of a workshop for young researchers, however, was rainy. The purpose of this workshop, entitled “The Future of Life and Death,” was to provide a chance for young Japanese and German scholars to have a frank exchange of opinions. Several defined panel sessions (“Perfecting the Human Body”; “The Current State of Medical Economics”; “PGD”, etc.) were held in English, and all allowed time for ample discussion. At some point

the rain lifted, but no one seemed to notice, as participants were engrossed in discussion. Students of Professor Eve-Marie Engels, head of the Tübingen Interdepartmental Centre for Ethics in the Sciences and Humanities (IZEW), researchers from the University of Tokyo COE Death and Life Studies project (Shigeyuki Akiyama, Ken'ichi Maegawa, Atsushi Tsuchiya, Takashi Asao), and Kayoko Yamamoto from Kyoto University based their papers on the current state of Life and Death in Japan and in Europe, and mutual and active dialogue transpired.

The following day (October 3rd) was the start of the conference Japanese and Asian Bioethics in Context, which featured many of the leading researchers of bioethics active in Germany and Japan. Professor Shimazono and other professors from the Japanese side also took part. Many of the younger researchers also took time to use the opportunity of being in Germany to broaden their own academic interests (An interview with a genetic counselor, a tour of a local school that employs the Steiner method, and a tour of the Tübingen library, etc.)

Following Tübingen, we next visited Toulouse. This visit was a continuation of the February 2006 symposium "Death and Beyond," which was held in co-operation with researchers from the Centre d'Anthropologie de Toulouse and the École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) at the University of Tokyo. With the dedication and cooperation of Professor Jean-Pierre Albert, director of the Centre d'Anthropologie de Toulouse, and Professor Anne Bouchy (EFEO), we were able to visit a local graveyard and the Sainte-Cécile Cathedral in Albi. The former site, built in the mid-19th century, was a representative site of burial created along with urbanization. The latter site, which was fortress like, is known for its unique religious design: that is, its unique architecture and a realistic depiction of the Last Judgment. Both sites were extremely beneficial sources for our studies.

Finally, on October 2nd, a research symposium composed of young scholars was held in Toulouse. 11 participants came from Japan and another 3 came from France. Researchers from the Japanese side included, Noriko Nijima, Satoko Matsumoto, Hiroe Shimauchi, Chino Sato, Isao Fukushima, Kiyonobu Date, Ryan Ward, Go Kurihara, Mie Kuroiwa, and Satoru Kimura. A broad variety of papers were presented (Ethico-religious thought; grave sites; cremation; funerary rites; spirits of the deceased; dissection; shamanism; literature; ballet and the dramatic arts; and art history). Professor Kazuomi Tada (Department of Japanese literature) offered a keynote speech on conceptions of death and life in ancient Japanese and Professor Michelle Fournié (University of Toulouse) gave a talk on medieval Christian art. Shimazono closed out the keynote speeches by briefly explaining our program. In both Germany and France, professors Seizo Sekine, Izumi Suzuki, and Masaru Ikezawa served as panel session chairs.

We arrived safely at home at Narita Airport on October 4th, where Professor Sumio Matsunaga gave a brief closing speech. This trip was particularly made possible by



organizing members partially those fluent in German, French, and English (Asao, Kuroiwa, Shimauchi, Fukushima, and Erik Schicketanz) and also by staff members of the COE Death and Life Studies office (Hiromi Yasuno, Chizuru Nakase). I cannot emphasize enough that being able to carry out these symposiums in such a wonderful environment and with such generous assistance will be of tremendous value to us in our future academic and research endeavors. We intend to publish proceedings from this research trip in the near future. We believe that this research trip to Germany and France, which was planned entirely by young scholars, was of great significance and benefit.

Workshop Report: The Sociology of Death and Life Studies

Shogo Takegawa (Professor, Faculty of Letters, Sociology)

On October 14th (Saturday), 2:00-5:30 p.m., the DALs program held a work shop on the subject of the “Sociology of Death and Life Studies.” The workshop was as follows:

- 1. Communism and Mega Death: The Case of the Soviet Union**
Yoshiya Soeda (Professor, Kinjo Gakuin University)
- 2. Commemoration of the Dead as seen from the Care of the Elderly:**
Sweden as a case study
Yorimitsu Ooka (Associate Professor, Chukyo University)
- 3. A Cultural Comparative View of Death**
Yukiko Nakasuji (Associate Professor, Aichi University of Education)

Commentator: Kenji Sato (Professor, University of Tokyo)

Chair: Shogo Takegawa (Professor, University of Tokyo)

Following the historian Hobsbawm’s definition of the 20th century as an age of mega death, Soeda discussed the example of death during the Soviet Revolution. Citing Communist terror, starvation, politically motivated executions, and the gulags, Soeda argued that one of the causes of these mass killings lies in Marxist thought.

Ooka began by showing film of the Swedish Graveyard of the anonymous people. The ashes of those buried in the graveyard are spread (throughout a forest), so that families cannot identify exactly where the deceased is located. Ooka noted how the establishment of this graveyard coincided with the establishment of social welfare laws, and pointed out how the public commemoration of the dead was linked to Sweden’s prominent policies for



providing social welfare for the elderly. The Protestant belief that the living can do nothing for the fortunes of the dead was also mentioned.

Nakasuji, who works from a comparative sociological perspective, clarified the state of death of contemporary Japan. According to Nakasuji, talk of death in Japan is redolent with anxiety concerning one not being commemorated after their own death. Such a concern for one's own death (and not those left behind) is notably modern. Still, in comparison, those in the United States, where there is a strong sense of self-autonomy, speak of death as being about the loss of an irreplaceable life, whereas in Japan death is expressed as the loss of a member of one's group.

In his comments, Sato noted that the salient commonality in all three papers were the dichotomy between 1. "Natural" death and "unnatural death [i.e., suicide, murder]" 2. One's emotions and praxis and 3. The imaginary of the afterlife and what one can learn from the dead. The proceedings of this workshop are scheduled to be published as a book titled *The Sociology of Death and Life* one volume of the DALS series.

Report on the Lecture by Dr. Christian Steineck

Susumu Shimazono (COE Program Chair, Faculty of Letters, Religious Studies)

On the afternoon of October 24th, 2006, Dr. Christian Steineck of the Research Centre for Modern Japan (Forschungsstelle Modernes Japan) at the University of Bonn gave a lecture entitled "Japanese Bioethics in a Globalized World" at Room 219 in the Hōbun 1 building. After the talk, a lively discussion was held in English. Dr. Steineck's original field of study is philosophy, but in recent years he has conducted research on the bioethical policies, discourses, and academic investigations in Japan. Drawing on his research, he discussed Japanese bioethics from an international perspective in the present lecture. Dr. Steineck, who is fluent in Japanese, was specifically requested to be permitted to hold the lecture in English. For we are concerned about how Japanese bioethics are perceived from abroad and came to the conclusion that English, as the lingua franca of international academia, would be the more appropriate tool of communication on this occasion.

Dr. Steineck opened his talk by giving a short review of the various issues that the researcher faces when working on the spread of bioethical issues across borders, cultures, and a variety of social domains. He pointed out that the question of what kind of relationships exists between policy making, legal systematization, and the academic discussion of ethical problems is particularly important. He further argued



that the question of how considerations based on universal concepts and a culturally specific thinking ought to be combined cannot have a simple solution. Japan, for instance, has enthusiastically sought to absorb western bioethics. Still, Dr. Steineck pointed out, there have also been frequent attempts to give expression to Japanese cultural particularities. However, some of these attempts have displayed distinct nationalistic tendencies. In Japan, Nihonjinron ideas (ideas stressing the uniqueness of Japanese culture), which also make frequent appearances in other domains, have had a strong impact on the field of bioethics, and it is easy for cultural nationalism to make its influence felt.

Usually, whenever the concept of culture is repeatedly invoked in a debate, it is pertinent to ask to what political end this term is mobilized. It is also important to ascertain that a cross-cultural debate is not hindered by cultural relativism. Of course, such an approach would not deny culturally specific contributions to the question of bioethics. There are indeed peculiarities in the development of bioethics in Japan, and it is possible to assume that these are linked to certain Japanese cultural traditions.

Next, Dr. Steineck divided the period of the introduction of Western bioethics and their supporting systems from the 1960s until today into three stages. Each of these stages is characterized by a corresponding issue: Informed Consent, Brain Death/Organ Transplants, and Human Embryo Research. The case of Brain Death/Organ Transplants has had a peculiar systematic development in the world. However, it cannot be said that the Japanese debates have had an international impact. This is a result of the weakness of Japanese bioethical discourse in the global arena.

Questions regarding the debates and current state of abortion and Prenatal Diagnosis (PND) in Japan and how Japan can make its own bioethical discourses felt in the global debate as well as many other questions were raised as part of a lively debate following the talk.



A Report on the Special Lecture and the Public Lecture by Specially-Appointed Professor Hisatake kato

Masaki Ichinose (Associate Professor, Faculty of Letters, Philosophy)

21st Century COE program “Construction of Life and Death Studies” invited Mr. Hisatake Kato, a pioneer in the field of applied ethics in Japan, as a specially-appointed professor to round off the final year. He delivered a special lecture in Room 215 in Hōbun Building 1 on November 22nd, 2006, and a public lecture on Death and Life Studies in Room 1 in Hōbun Building 2 on November 29th. He is one of leading Japanese philosophers who are known for his study of Hegel’s philosophy as well as that of applied ethics. His two lectures were most substantial ones firmly based on his philosophical studies.

The special lecture on November 22nd was titled “The Overall Picture of Life”. Though it was a weekday, more than fifty listeners attended. Professor Kato talked in his sophisticatedly witted way about the history of life science and its interrelationship with the history of thoughts about life. First, he dealt with Aristotle's teleology and criticism leveled at it by Bacon and Descartes in early-modern times. He did so in order to expose a conflict between two ideas: an idea that purposes and values immanent in the nature, and one that purposes and values derive from human actions and do not immanent in the nature. He pays much attention to the fact that the invention of telescopes and the discovery of particulates were made in the age of Descartes. Cartesian mechanism, however, came to attract criticism after Leibnizian philosophy. Though life is part of natural phenomena, its peculiarity came to be recognized. Such opinion gave birth to chemistry and organic chemistry by way of German idealism. Finally, it led to the birth of evolutionistic ideas, which reads finality into the whole, even if it is not intentionality that accomplishes purposes. Based on this point, Professor Kato went as far as to raise an ethical suggestion. He opposed manipulation of life that is oriented to reduce life into material, such as rapid transformation of genetic pool. The lecture was so exciting like a magnificent panorama that many attendants addressed questions to him. I questioned him if human desire to manipulate life itself is part of a phenomenon of life. I believe we could deepen our understandings through these questions and answers.



The open lecture on November 29th was titled “Life and Death: Law and Ethics.” Although it was also a weekday, more than eighty listeners attended. The lecture was on the fundamental question as to the difference between law and ethics. Professor Kato traced historical facts of ancient Greece to prove that law and ethics were subtly different from each other although they have something in common. He then argued the plurality of law and the need of discussions about bad laws. He also focused on Kantian philosophy. According to him, Kantian practical philosophy, especially its system of deontology represented by the categorical imperative, is unworkable as a theory of legislation because it is built on the unfeasible principle that strictly forbids pleasure even though it uses legal language. On the other hand, he argued, utilitarianism, which is built on the principle of harm to others, is not so much ethics as a theory about legislation. He argued this referring to the ethics of Sidgwick. He then mentioned “Lockean



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provisos” that private ownership is established only when others own enough. This idea, according to him, belongs to the utilitarian tradition and is the origin of generation ethics and environmental ethics, referring also to the theory of tolerance. Then he concluded that the ultimate goal of law is to establish the principle of coexistence among different religions and cultures. The logical structure of his lecture was so magnificent and moving that a question-and-answer session livened up. I addressed some questions to him again, such as one; what is the unit to which law reaches a nation or the whole human race? Many questions like this will arise in future. I believe Professor Kato's lecture can lay the foundation stone for the development of the argument.

After the lectures, interested people got together to continue discussion over dinner. Professor Kato's lecture proved to be a very meaningful event that brought Death and Life Studies Project to a successful completion. As the planner of the event I took great joy.

Report: Public Symposium “That Which Supports Clinical Death”

Sei'ichi Takeuchi (Professor, Faculty of Letters, Ethics)

On December 2nd (Saturday), the COE DALs program and the Applied Ethics Education program held a joint symposium on “That Which Supports Clinical Death” at the Medical Department lecture hall. Gen Ooi, emeritus professor of the Faculty of Medicine, began by noting how, like a coin, the process of death is part and parcel of life. Despite this, the tendency (and resolve) to deny death and only consider life creates an illusion of immortality and, yet, also a terrible fear of death itself. Based on his long clinic experience, Professor Ooi noted the need for realizing this connection [between life and death] at a number of levels.

This talk was followed by Shunsuke Serizawa, a noted social critic, who criticized the fact that the terms “clinical (rinsho)” and “site of practice (genba)” tended to exclude those not versed in such practices from the space of discourse. Instead, Serizawa [argued that] we should examine this from the perspective of experience. He further discussed this experiential view of death: the problems related to the subjective experience of death (i.e., that which cannot be objectified); the specific objectification of death as found in the death of the other; and the quantitative third-person view of death (i.e., the care and disposal of cadavers).

Next, author Randy Taguchi, responding to the topics broached by the previous two presenters, noting how he is actively, through his own experiences, searching for connections with his ancestors and the Earth. He noted how the power



of these relations or connections and also of place cannot be separated from the problem of death at a clinical level. While learning from the various spiritualities found in these places, he remarked that the clinical site of terminal care was one such place to be considered.

Lastly, Susumu Shimazono (Religious Studies) discussed the notion of untamed death as found in pre-modern Japan and the West.

This possibility of thinking of this kind of death, is, he argued, allows for a discipline differing from that of Western Death Studies and Thanatology (both which have tended to see death as a stand-alone phenomenon), and what the Construction of Death and Life Studies must further seek to address. With this, Shimazono offered both a conclusion and a new point of development for the DALS program at the University of Tokyo.

During the group discussion, Sei'ichi Takeuchi (Ethics) begin by discussing what "clinical death" refers to and the meaning of death as something disassociated with life. Further, he talked about that which "supports" this kind of death and the necessity of rethinking this support. Takeuchi agreed for the need for understanding the further connections and relations concerning this notion of death but also pointed out the intractable belief of the death of the "individual." He also spoke on the need for closure and how views of the afterlife also come into play. This symposium, which ran for some 4 hours, was also attended by a great number of non-academics who enthusiastically offered many questions and comments. The interest in the issue as held by the general public was certainly confirmed. Proceedings from this symposium are scheduled to be published in volume 1 of a five-volume series on Death and Life Studies (University of Tokyo Press, late 2007).



Report on the International Symposium "Death and Life Studies concerning Psychiatry and Offences: On Homicide"

Masaki Ichinose (Associate Professor, Faculty of Letters, Philosophy)

On December 9th (Saturday), an international symposium with the title "Death and Life Studies concerning Psychiatry and Offences: On Homicide" was held in Lecture Hall 1 of the Hōbun Building 2 as one of the closing events of the Death and Life Studies project. An audience of around one-hundred had assembled, showing the extent of the existing interest in this topic. The symposium was divided into two sessions. During the pre-noon session, Professor Jill Peay from the London

School of Economics gave a lecture, and in the afternoon session four short talks were given by Japanese researchers followed by a panel discussion.

Professor Peay’s talk, which started at 11:00 am, was entitled “Insanity and Responsibility: Does M’Naghten do Justice to the Manifestly Mad?” and dealt with the issue whether the so-called M’Naghten Rule is implemented appropriately in the case of “clearly insane offenders” for which it has been originally created. I, personally, functioned as chairperson and introduced Professor Peay to the audience. The M’Naghten Rule forms the foundation of the so-called Insanity Defense and is based on an actual murder



case that occurred in 1843 in which the accused was exempted from responsibility since he was diagnosed as insane. Professor Peay is one of the leading authorities on this issue in Great Britain. In her talk, she explained that the M’Naghten Rule is frequently not applied even in cases where it should be and argued for a wider implementation of the Insanity Defense in face of current widespread hesitation towards its application. In response to the talk, members of the audience voiced skepticism against the proposed expansion of the Insanity Defense and Professor Peay’s liberal stance. I myself also raised a question to the effect that the interests of the victims of mentally ill offenders must be taken more into account. Professor Peay carefully and sincerely responded to each of these points and everyone present realized once more the universality of this issue and its deep-rooted problematic nature.

The afternoon session started at 1:40 pm. with Professor Sumihiko Kumano’s briefly greeting the audience. The panel consisted of the four panelists and two commentators, with Professor Hisatake Kato functioning both as commentator and chairperson. The first panelist was Dr. Akira Sakuta, a specialist in criminal psychiatry associated with Seigakuin University. Dr. Sakuta talked about “The Problem of Care for Mentally Disordered Offenders and Medical Treatment.” Drawing on cases he has dealt with personally, Dr. Sakuta gave a detailed account of the state of treatment for mentally ill offenders in contemporary Japan and – arguing against a recent trend to demand harsher punishments – called for improved facilities for mentally disordered offenders. The second panelist was Mr. Mitsuhide Yahiro, a lawyer from Fukuoka City, who gave a talk entitled “It is society that is “disordered”.” Based on his abundant experiences as a lawyer, Mr.



Yahiro discussed the current state of facilities for mentally disordered persons and argued that by changing the existing misperceptions of society towards persons who undergo psychiatric treatment, various problems associated with mentally disordered offenders would also likely be improved. Both Dr. Sakuta's and Mr. Yahiro's positions are close to Professor Peay's in that they all make a liberal argument that puts the emphasis on the well-being of mentally disordered persons.

Professor Mariko Hasegawa from The Graduate University for Advanced Studies who specializes in biology was the third panelist. Grounding her talk "An Evolutionary-Biological Analysis of Homicide" in detailed empirical data, Professor Hasegawa brought up many interesting points such as that homicide is one possible reaction to the environment that living beings (including humans) may take. She also explained that the percentage of mentally disordered offenders in the case of ordinary murders is low, but that it increases in the case of parricide. The last talk of the panel was given by myself under the title "The Continuous Extension of Insane Homicide." Making a philosophical argument, I stressed that sane persons and people in mental care are connected as both are exposed to a sort of coincidence called "Moral Luck." Furthermore, I argued that since a homicide causes "harms," focus should be on the reparation of these harms through "Restorative Justice" and that the offending party should be mainly defined as the cause for these "damages", when mens rea (as one factor of the cause) should be seen from the perspective of probability. Following this approach, I concluded that mentally disordered offenders should be treated continuously with sane offenders.

After the four panelists had finished their talks, Professor Susumu Oda, a well-known psychiatrist at Tezukayamagakuin University, made some comments from the point of view of his discipline. Grounding his argument in his own rich professional experiences, Professor Oda took a position diametrically opposed to that proposed by Professor Peay, Dr. Sakuta, and Mr. Yahiro. He argued that readily exempting mentally disordered offenders might lead to an increase in danger for society. Chairperson- cum-commentator Professor Kato proposed that a comparison of this issue to crimes committed by sane offenders is necessary. These comments led neatly into a lively debate among the symposium participants in whom Professor Peay used the opportunity to ask the panelists various questions and discuss some more cases from Britain. The audience also participated in the debate before anyone realized it was already past 6:30 pm. Finally, Professor Susumu Shimazono, the head of the Death and Life Studies Center, gave the closing address and the symposium, which succeeded in revealing many fascinating issues, came to an end.

A reception was held after the official end of the symposium at the Sanjo Conference Hall. After an address by vice dean Hisao Komatsu, who represented the organizers of the symposium, the participants continued their discussions while simultaneously fostering amicable relations with their colleagues. I am convinced that interest in this difficult topic of psychiatric care and criminal offenses has been further increased through the symposium and I am certain that the symposium has been a great success for the Death and Life Studies project.

The Last Open Symposium for DALS Ended Successfully (Report on the Mini-Symposium: “Sacred Images: As a Means to Communicate with the Afterlife”)

Shigetoshi Osano (Professor, Faculty of Letters, Art History)

On December 16th, 2006, a mini-symposium, “Sacred Image: As a Means to Communicate with the Afterlife,” cosponsored by DALS (21st Century COE Program “Construction of Death and Life Studies Concerning Culture and Values of Life”) and the Department of Art History of the Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology was held from half past one to half past five. The meeting was quite well attended by audience composed of twenty people from the host side and about sixty general-admission listeners. The first division composed of an English lecture by Professor Gerhard Wolf (Director of the German Art History Research Institute at Florence) entitled “Devine Bodies, Sacred Images and Holy Sites: Contact Zones between the Living and the Death, between Heaven and Earth in Christian Cultures” and a Japanese lecture by Mr. Takeo Oku (Investigator of Cultural Assets at the Agency of Cultural Affairs), “Buddhist Statues and Human Bodies.”

The following is the main points of Professor Wolf's lecture: In the ancient Mediterranean culture, living people curved statues and drew portraits as mementos of dead people. Those works entered the realm of the sacred as guarantees for the afterlife. On the other hand, in Christian culture, images were inherited as dialectics that connect needs in this world and those in the next. But images in Christian culture always bore a fundamental problem, that is, conflicts and distinguishment between idols and sacred icons. Christian images thus had “double life.” In Christian rites, sacred statues and portraits functioned and worked as “performers” and thus had “life.”, called “mimetical life of images”. They



also had “virtual life” because the aesthetic and portrayal nature of image gave them vitality. He used many slide images and materials for the late medieval period to show some examples, in which sacred images were vitalized through interplay with the public. He then mentioned the vera icon, an authentic image of Christ, suggestively discussing its relation with sacred images and portraits in rituals. In the thirteenth century, Pope Benedict XII declared that if one looks at and prays to a vera icon in this world, he will be guaranteed to “see the God” after his death. Since then, many reproductions of the vera icon have been made. Throughout the history, contact with the sacred through materials such as sacred images and relics have represented belief in the sacred. He concluded that the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries saw fascinating negotiations and interplay between images and belief, in

which art pursued sensible and spiritual tension through “divine power.”

Mr. Oku dealt with two images of Buddha: a statue of Amida (Amitabha, or 阿弥陀如来) in which ashes were placed in, and one of Shakyamuni Tathagata (释迦如来) whose inside is thickly coated with a blend of ashes and dirt. It was the custom to deposit such objects or commoner materials like hair, teeth, and fingernails in statues. He related the custom to Buddhist doctrines, tracing its origin back to an Indian practice to deposit Buddha's bones (舍利)



in a statue. He also discussed that the custom was introduced to China to be developed into another one to put Buddha's teeth (仏牙) or the vital organs (五臟六腑) made of silk into a Buddhist statue in order to vitalize it. Buddha's statue was identified with Buddha himself through the deposit of his body parts. Such identification made it possible to imaginarily identify a statue with the possessor of the deposited body parts (i.e. a dead person or a donor of the statue). He referred to written supplications for Buddhist temples (願文), fables, and diaries, to prove that a statue and its donor were identified by having a statue carved to be the same size as him. As an experienced investigator of cultural assets who has made many on-the-spot surveys, Mr. Oku's analysis is empirical based on ample evidence. What was particularly striking was the following: later in the period, more and more donors had kechien-kyomyo (結縁交名, or paper on which people's names were written with wish that they would enter the Buddhist Elysian Fields) deposited in statues. In the meantime, technique and styles of sculpture were changing. He related these facts to a decline in a magical character of Buddhist statues. The decline weakened the function of identification while it led to the increase in the custom of depositing materials inside statues. He concluded that the space inside a statue was seen as a channel to the world of different space and time through which the belief of people involved in making the statue was passed to the other shore. The two Buddhist statues, he said, attest to such mentality.

The second division was a debate session. After PhD Akira Akiyama, Associate Professor, raised suggestive questions, some subjects were chosen from questionnaires collected from the audience. The discussion lasted for over one and half an hour. Professor Wolf and some speakers in the heated debate spoke so fast that interpreters and audience might miss some points. However, according to questionnaires collected at the end of the symposium, many of the audience rated the sessions highly, saying they were impressed by the speakers' persuasive and thoughtful arguments. Thus the symposium ended in success.



A Guide to Our Publications

The following is a list of bulletins the COE program already published or will publish from this winter to next spring:

A Collection of Symposium Reports: Care and Self-Determination.

(Already published. Japanese.)

Animacy in Languages.

(Already published. English.)

Bulletin of Death and Life Studies, Vol. 3 La mort et les au-delàs.

(Not yet published. French.)

Life and Death Studies. Fall 2006.

(Not yet published. Japanese.)

The Future of Life and Death:
Contemporary Bioethics in Europe and Japan.

(Not yet published. English.)

Death and Beyond Death II:
Concepts and Representation of Life and Death in Art, Religion and Culture.

La mort et les au-delà II :
conception et représentation de la mort dans les arts, la religion et la culture.

(Not yet published. Japanese and French.)

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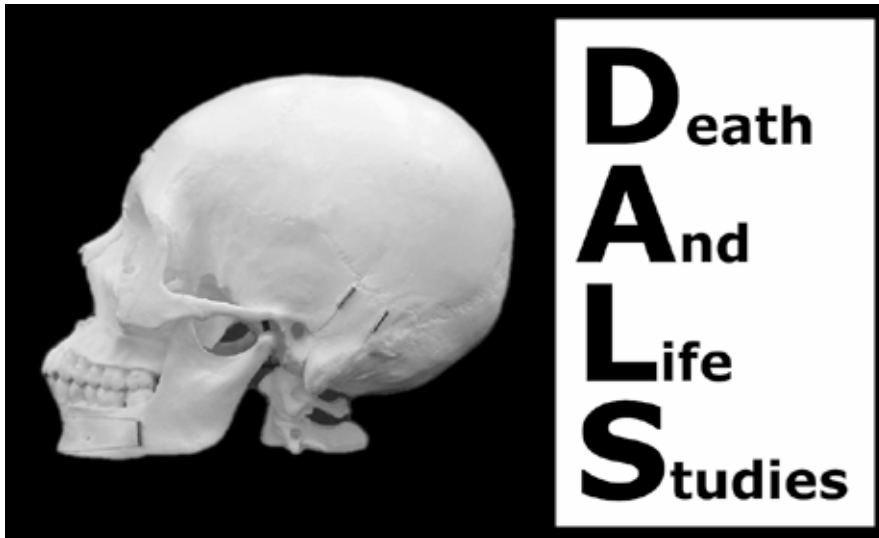
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