

21世紀COE研究拠点形成プログラム「死生学の構築」講演研究会

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プラトンから「生きる」（黒澤明）まで

行き詰まり社会における問いかける生と意義ある死について

（初期近代ユダヤ教における死の儀礼化を手がかりに）

[英語、質疑応答通訳あり]

From Plato to Ikiru:

**On the Examined Life and the Meaningful Death in
the ‘Stuck Society’ with a Footnote from the
Ritualization of Death in Early Modern Judaism**

時：6月25日（水）、15時30分～17時30分

所：法文2号館316教室

This lecture will consider the ‘Living Dead’ and the ‘Stuck Society’ as cross-cultural themes that tap into the vitalizing power of death. Specific examples will be drawn from Japanese and Jewish history.

It will consider two dimensions of a philosophical anthropology that require significant elaboration in the development of Death and Life Studies into Applied Ethics with humane and equitable public policy implications: the unique qualities of humans to anticipate death and not only to respond to life-threatening dangers; and the human endowments of memory that can result in empathic identification with or vengeful brutalization of the other.

Plato’s prescription and admonishment that “the unexamined life is not worth living,” for many poses a dilemma. Most of us are too overwhelmed by the exigencies of daily living to spend adequate time on reflection. The division of labor in developing societies ensures the role of professional “examiners” of life, from grandmothers to pollsters, not to mention media stars, religious leaders and academics who so often tell us more than we care to know about matters external to our lives while they

often inhibit our own capacity to reflect upon ourselves. Is it the process or the goal that makes the examination of life so important? Are there not other endeavors that make life all the more “worth living?”

The lecture will focus upon Akira Kurosawa's *Ikiru*, indisputably one of the greatest films in cinematic history. Kurosawa, like Plato before him, poses the question of the unexamined life. He focuses on precisely a moment when Japanese society was getting *unstuck*. The longer enduring sibling and progeny of Kanji Watanabe, Kurosawa's bureaucrat and *salaryman*, this mythic Japanese *Jederman* were unleashing entrepreneurial energies that would transform the world.

Several decades later, a function of economic cycles as much as economic exuberance, Japan is again stuck. What has happened to Kanji Watanabe's poignant quest? “I just can't die. I don't know what I've been living for all of these years.” At the same time, Japan's demographics are following patterns of other ‘post industrial’ societies: a lower birth rate and better health result in an aging population; economic retrenchment in fewer employment opportunities for those coming of age and earlier retirement for the aged. For both sides of the life cycle, what will be the role of life examination in a 21st century Japan that is to get unstuck, and what resources can be distributed to each with what expectations for social benefit?

The lecture will examine another stuck society. Jews in the early modern period, and how the anticipation of death and concern with memory lead to an increase in self and collective examination. In a religion where the attention to death and the after life were not dominant themes and received relatively scant attention, suddenly in this period, many new rituals developed around the sick bed and in connection with the dying. With the increasing encroachment of empirical science, precisely at this moment, increasing domains of Jewish life were ritualized. An examination of rituals and ethical wills as well as the presentation of some of the beautiful art and artifacts that this generated will point to the examination of life, of individual and collective identities were being expressed in and stimulated by this new ritualization.

The lecture will conclude with general and comparative remarks on other stuck societies in the contemporary world, memory and violence, and the ways in which the confrontation with death influences the way in which we live.