

Local, Regional, and Global: Notes on the EAJS Next-Generation Workshop

ローカル、リージョナル、そしてグローバルへ
—EAJS 2021 「国際次世代ワークショップ」参加記—

GU Xueni*

谷 雪妮

In this next-generation workshop, we explored the development of political orders, religions, and representations surrounding the concept of sovereignty in East Asia between the early modern and modern periods from a transnational and transdisciplinary perspective. We were able to shed light on three points: (1) the formation of local political orders throughout the East Asian region, their respective intellectual contexts, and the activities of mediators between different political orders (Cheng Yongchao's and Mick Deneckere's papers); (2) issues of contemporaneity and correlation across various Asian regions brought by the movement of people and their interactions on the cusp of modernity (Kameyama Mitsuhiro's and Chen Yijie's papers); (3) the crisis and revival of traditions in face of the emergence of modernity and modern nation-states (Deneckere's, Kameyama's, and Chen's papers).

As my research focus is modern East Asian intellectual history and the history of international relations, I am not a specialist on the subject of each paper. I have therefore based my comments on the content of the presentations and the issues that pertain to my field.

In the first presentation, Cheng analyzed the diplomatic correspondence of Tsushima to elucidate how the domain deliberately concealed commercial negotiations with Pusan from the Tokugawa shogunate. In my comments, I evoked the research of Watanabe Miki on early modern Ryukyu—specifically her book *Kinsei Ryūkyū to chūnichi kankei* (“Early Modern Ryukyu and Sino-Japanese Relations”) published in 2012 by Yoshikawa Kōbunkan. The author demonstrates that the Ryukyuan court likewise concealed and fabricated information when communicating with both the Qing dynasty and the Tokugawa shogunate in order to consolidate its own political autonomy. Furthermore, I indicated that when comparing the position of places like Tsushima and Ryukyu as mediators in the interstices of different political orders, one could also explore the perspective of their own mutual connections. Cheng agreed with my comments.

In the second presentation, Deneckere revealed the persistent influence of Shin Buddhism within the Chōshū domain at the end of the Tokugawa period and identified the sect's support of the Meiji Restoration as one of the causes for the brevity of the early Meiji anti-Buddhist movement known as *haibutsu kishaku*. I reacted with two questions. The first one concerned the extent

* Doctor of Letters, Kyoto University 京都大学博士 (文学)

to which Chōshū officials employed by the Meiji government promoted Buddhism and the Shin sect. Deneckere offered the example of Kido Takayoshi. Kido, a samurai from Chōshū, realized that Buddhism could be the religion to spearhead Japan's modernization during a trip to Europe in the early Meiji period, when he had the opportunity to interact with a Shin Buddhist monk. He was also the first Meiji official to hold a Shin Buddhist funeral at the temple Nishi Honganji. Therefore, although a staunch supporter of the Meiji Restoration, Kido can be seen as representative of those who backed Shin Buddhism. Secondly, concerning Shin Buddhist monk Gesshō's *Buppō gokokuron* ("Discourse on protecting the country with the Buddha's doctrine") mentioned in the presentation, I asked whether the sermons of Shin Buddhist monks on the notion of sovereignty had an impact on other Buddhist sects. Deneckere explained that while it is difficult to assess the precise impact of Gesshō himself, Shin Buddhist monks were an important force in criticizing the religious policies of the Meiji government.

The next presentation was also themed around late Tokugawa and early Meiji religious history, and Kameyama introduced the "Precepts Revival Movement" of Shingon monk Shaku Unshō. My questions were about the connection between modernity and Shaku Unshō's movement, and how the fact that Shaku Unshō sent his nephew Shaku Kōnen to South Asia contributed to Unshō's "True Dharma Movement." Kameyama, citing the previous research of Buddhologists like Ōtani Eiichi, explained that returning to the original teachings of Shakyamuni was one of the defining traits of modern Buddhism. He added that, although research on the subject has traditionally focused on the efforts of Shin Buddhist monks toward modernization, the desire of Shingon monks to reform Buddhism by promoting the revival of an idealized, lost form of the religion from antiquity was also informed by modernity. In addition, Kameyama noted that Shaku Unshō sent Shaku Kōnen to South Asia because he saw Sri Lanka's Theravada Buddhism and the traditions of local Vinaya monks as an ideal model for his own Buddhist reform.

The last presenter, Chen, focused on the symbols of modern nation-states and considered the interactions between Japanese and Chinese artists and their creations depicting the Japanese emperor and the Chinese leader Mao Zedong as "red suns." Through an analysis of the works of Yokoyama Taikan and Fu Baoshi, Chen discussed how both of them drew from traditions of ink wash painting in East Asia to produce their own expressions of the "red sun" symbol. In response, I mentioned that, beyond the analysis of painters' forms of expression from a history of art perspective, it is also necessary to study how the red sun became a central symbol for modern nation-states from the point of view of its social history. I referred to the idea of "invented traditions" in modern nations proposed by Eric Hobsbawm, and suggested pursuing further the notions of circulation and consumption of pictures in mass society, as well as the reproduction of images through media.

This is an overview of my comments on the papers from the aforementioned presenters. While the subjects spanned the various disciplines of diplomatic and religious history alongside religious thought and art history, they all had in common a research approach that questions the framework of nation-states. Despite all falling within the field of Japanese studies, not only did they highlight local areas and contexts such as Tsushima and the Chōshū domain, but they also emphasized transnational movements of people and the reappropriation of knowledge and traditions around the East Asian region.

The research approach of each presenter has greatly inspired me. I only regret that, due to

time constraints and my own limitations, we were not able to discuss the position of local and regional experiences and histories in relation to contemporary global history. I would like to explore further in the future the ways that our own research can contribute to the humanities on a global scale as we unravel local and regional historical contexts.

As a final note, I would like to thank the professors and staff at the Consortium for Global Japanese Studies and the Office of International Research Exchange for their efforts to ensure the seamless organization of this workshop.