

ITCS Seminar #01 (2017 Academic Year)

The Buddhist Ruins of Southern Uzbekistan: Kara-tepe and Zurmala

Date : February 15 (Thursday), 2018, 13:30~16:00
Venue : K-222, Koshien Hall
Lecturers : Prof. Atsushi IWAMOTO (Associate Professor, Rissho University)

The 1st Seminar of the Institute of Turkish Culture Studies of the 2017 academic year was held on Thursday, February 15, 2018 at Kōshien Hall. Prof. Atsushi IWAMOTO (Associate Professor, Faculty of Letters, Rissho University), who was invited to speak at the seminar, gave a lecture entitled The Buddhist Ruins of Southern Uzbekistan: Kara-tepe and Zurmala.

Kara-tepe and Zurmala are located in Termez in the Surxondaryo Region of Uzbekistan. Termez, where Buddhism flourished under the Kushan Empire, is known for having been visited by Xuanzang in the 7th century.

First, Prof. Iwamoto explained the geographical features of the sites of the Buddhist ruins in southern Uzbekistan. He then presented the Rissho University Uzbekistan Academic Research Group's findings about Kara-tepe from their 2014 survey. While it was previously thought to have only functioned as a Buddhist temple until the 4th century, the Rissho University Group's survey yielded new findings that suggest that this may have extended into the 6th century. The second half was a discussion about the Buddhist stupa Zurmala, which is visible from the southwest corner of Kara-tepe and which the Rissho University Group is currently conducting survey research in preparation for its preservation and restoration, and for creating proposals for its reconstruction. A lively discussion took place during the question-and-answer session following the lecture.

Through this lecture, we were able to learn about an important historical city that cannot be left out of any discussions about Buddhism's eastward transmission, the spread of Buddhism in Central Asia, and the East-West history of the Silk Road.



Seminar Poster



Venue at Koshien Hall

ITCS Seminar #02 (2017 Academic Year)

Zoroastrianism and Fire Temples

Date : February 23 (Friday), 2018, 13:30~16:00
Venue : K-222, Koshien Hall
Lecturers : Prof. Kazuya YAMAUCHI (Research Institute of Cultural Properties, Teikyo University)

The 2nd Seminar of the Institute of Turkish Culture Studies of the 2017 academic year was held on Friday, February 23, 2018 at Kōshien Hall. This time, Prof. Kazuya YAMAUCHI (Research Institute of Cultural Properties, Teikyo University), who is engaged in the preservation and excavation of cultural properties in Asian countries, was invited to speak at the seminar, and gave a lecture entitled Zoroastrianism and Fire Temples.

In the first half, Prof. Yamauchi gave an overview of the history of Zoroastrianism and its subjects of worship. He then explained that Zarathustra, the founder of the religion, is one of the world's oldest prophets and that the ideas of Zoroastrianism are connected to many other religions, such as Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism, and may have been central to them.

In the second half, Prof. Yamauchi used Farsi-language videos and abundant photographs from excavations to introduce the religious structures built in Dargaz in northeastern Iran in the 5th century. He then discussed Zoroastrianism's many fire temples, which he researched while studying abroad in Iran 30 years ago, using sketches he himself made and photographs from that time. He also touched on new discoveries and the way architectural structures were used at the time, which he understands on a deep level precisely because he has been in the field. The profound content of Prof. Yamauchi's lecture has implications for many other fields.



Seminar Poster



Venue at Koshien Hall

ITCS Seminar # 03 (2017 Academic Year)

Stupas and Gandhara Sculptures in the Buddhist Temples of Northwest India

Date : March 8 (Thursday), 2018, 13:30~16:00

Venue : K-222, Koshien Hall

Lecturers : Prof. Satoshi NAIKI (Assistant Professor, Center for Cultural Heritage Studies, Kyoto University)

The 3rd Seminar of the Institute of Turkish Culture Studies of the 2017 academic year was held on Thursday, March 8, 2018 at Kōshien Hall. Prof. Satoshi NAIKI (Assistant Professor, Center for Cultural Heritage Studies, Kyoto University), who was invited to speak at the seminar, gave a lecture entitled Stupas and Gandhara Sculptures in the Buddhist Temples of Northwest India.

Prof. Naiki began with a description of the Buddhist ruins and history of northwestern India, centered around Gandhara, as well as prior research on the subject. He then presented some Butsuden-zu, or bas-relief friezes that illustrate the historical Buddha's life from just before his birth to right after his death, and explained the stories depicted in each of them. Prof. Naiki has analyzed materials created by the Kyoto University Iran-Afghanistan-Pakistan Academic Research Group in a study he has conducted on the relationship between the stupas and the friezes that were used to dignify them, which had not been covered in previous studies. He explained that with regard to the friezes excavated from the ruins of the Thareli, Mekhasanda, and Ranighat temples in Gandhara, it is possible to estimate the period during which they were created and which scenes in their Butsuden-zu were well-received by measuring them and dividing them into groups based on the composition of their images.

As Prof. Naiki's research relates friezes to stupas, which are architectural structures, there was a lively discussion about the relationship between sculpture and architecture during the question-and-answer session, making this seminar an enriching one.



Seminar Poster



Venue at Koshien Hall