

Silk Road Culture and Architecture Lecture Series #08

Indian Buddhist Culture and the Silk Road: The Beautiful Colors and Skills of the Craft

Date : May 26 (Saturday), 2018, 13:00~
Venue : The Industry Club of Japan Hall (Tokyo, Japan)
Lecturers : Prof. Yasuko FUKUYAMA
(Faculty of International Studies, Ryukoku University)
Assoc. Prof. Yoshiko SHIMADZU (National Museum of Japanese History)
Performer : Ms. Miki NONAKA (Eastern Indian-style Dancer)

The 8th “Silk Road Culture and Architecture Lecture Series”, entitled “Indian Buddhist Culture and the Silk Road: The Beautiful Colors and Skills of the Craft”, sponsored by Mukogawa Women’s University School of Architecture, Graduate School of Architecture Major and co-sponsored by the Tokyo Center, was held on Saturday, May 26, 2018, at the Industry Club of Japan in Marunouchi, Tokyo. In addition to lectures by Yasuko Fukuyama, professor of international studies at Ryukoku University, and Yoshiko Shimadzu, associate professor of information materials research in the Research Department of the National Museum of Japanese History, Miki Nonaka (an Eastern Indian-style dancer) was invited to perform the classical Indian dance Odissi.

Yasuko Fukuyama presented a lecture entitled “The Various Aspects of Indian Buddhist Culture as Seen Through Cave Art with a Focus on the Ajanta Cave Temple.” She first spoke about ancient Indian Buddhist architecture and its historical background and explained the particularities of earlier and later period cave temples. In addition, she provided an overview of the Ajanta Cave Temple and detailed commentary on the multi-colored stone Buddhist statues, murals, and architectural decoration inside each cave. Finally, she introduced points of connection between ancient Indian Buddhist ruins and modern Japan.

At this lecture series, Miki Nonaka performed the classical Indian Odissi dance. Odissi (Orissi) is a traditional dance of the Eastern Indian state of Odisha; it is also recognized by the Indian government as one of the eight classical dances of India. The dance combines masculine square forms with beautiful feminine curvaceous forms, and since many of the poses are modeled after the temple sculptures of the Odisha region, the dance is often described as a “moving sculpture.” With the bells on her feet jingling, Ms. Nonaka performed the magnificent dance and explained the dance formations and the use of the hands for expression.

Yoshiko Shimadzu presented a lecture entitled “Architectural Painting and Wall Painting at the Ajanta Cave Temple from the Perspective of the Painting Materials Used.” Colorful paintings have been preserved on the ceilings and walls inside the Ajanta Caves, and Associate Professor Shimadzu provided a detailed explanation of the materials used for the paintings as well as the scientific method used to examine them. She explained that the painting materials included natural resources, such as local earth, stones, plants, and insects, as well as items from the Silk Road and further noted that materials varied according to time period and factors such as technological development.



Opening address by Professor Okazaki, Head of the Department of Architecture



Prof. Yasuko Fukuyama



Assoc. Prof. Yoshiko Shimadzu



Performance by Ms. Miki Nonaka



The Industry Club of Japan Hall

Silk Road Culture and Architecture Lecture Series #09

The Culture of Stupa-Beliefs

Date : January 19 (Saturday), 2019, 13:00~
Venue : The Industry Club of Japan Hall (Tokyo, Japan)
Lecturers : Prof. Akira MIYAJI
(Professor Emeritus of Nagoya University and Ryukoku University)
Assoc. Prof. Shumpei IWAI (Ryukoku Museum, Ryukoku University)
Performer : Mr. Tarō TERAHARA (Bansuri Player), Ms. Ayako IKEDA (Tabla Player),
and Ms. Makiko IZAWA (Tanpura Player)

The 9th “Silk Road Culture and Architecture Lecture Series”, entitled “The Culture of Stupa-Beliefs”, sponsored by Mukogawa Women’s University School of Architecture, Graduate School of Architecture Major and co-sponsored by the Tokyo Center, was held on Saturday, January 19, 2019, at the Industry Club of Japan in Marunouchi, Tokyo. In addition to lectures by professor emeritus of Nagoya University and Ryukoku University Akira Miyaji, and Associate Professor of Ryukoku University and Curator of Ryukoku Museum Shumpei Iwai, Tarō Terahara (bansuri player), Ayako Ikeda (tabla player), and Makiko Izawa (tanpura player) were invited to perform classical music from Northern India.

Akira Miyaji presented a lecture entitled “The Shape of the Stupas/Pagodas and Worldview: India’s Origins and Evolution”. Regarding India’s stupas, which are said to be both the tombs for the relics of the historical Buddha and symbols of the immortal earthly paradise of nirvana, he provided detailed commentary on their origins, their image and worldview, and development. He also spoke about stupas in relation to sacred trees and pillars, their connection to a belief in the cosmic axis, their influence on the building of high pagodas in Hinduism, and developments in Chinese and Japanese pagodas.

Shumpei Iwai presented a lecture entitled “Stupas of Gandhara: Their Periods and Spread”. Gandhara is the ancient name for the area covering from what is now Eastern Afghanistan to Northwestern Pakistan; it was a strategic point of exchange connecting India to central Asia. The Buddhism which had been transmitted from India changed in Gandhara; “Buddhist statues” and “copies of the sutras” started being made, later spreading to central Asia and to the western regions of China. Beginning with the Buddhist ruins that remain in Gandhara, he provided detailed commentary on temple structures and characteristics, with a focus on stupas.

The lecture series featured a classical Indian music performance, including Tarō Terahara on bansuri (wind instrument), Ayako Ikeda on tabla (percussion/rhythm), and Makiko Izawa on tanpura (stringed instrument/basso continuo). Classical Indian music developed as the music of the imperial court of the Mughal Empire; it is performed by improvisation based on the sound and melody of the “raga” determined by factors such as the time and season of the performance. The bansuri is a transverse flute with 6 finger holes, made of a special kind of bamboo grown in Northeast India with long internodes. The performance included songs centered around this flute such as “Raag Hamsadhvani/Swan Song”.



Prof. Akira Miyaji



Assoc. Prof. Shumpei Iwai



Performance of Classical Music from Northern India



The Industry Club of Japan Hall