

GSI Caravan

Project Title: Revolutionizing the concept of the “universal” through the experiences of small nations and collectivities

Principal Investigator: Kiyonobu Date

Progress Report for the Academic Year 2020

The major Caravan activities in the academic year 2020 are as follows: (1) we invited colleges from the Chinese University of Hong Kong to participate in a joint symposium (December 2020, online); (2) prior to the symposium, two workshops were held by project members (June and September 2020, online); (3) two meetings were convened, marking the beginning and end of the academic year (April 2020 and March 2021, online); and (4) caravan director Kiyonobu Date wrote a preliminary essay with the aim of broadly sharing the central issues addressed in the project (“A Preliminary Essay on ‘Small Nations and Collectivities’: Redefining the Universal from Religious and Secular Perspectives in Modern Japan” published in *Odysseus* Vol. 25 [Issue 2020], 2021.)

The year began with the first meeting held on April 27, 2020, where an annual project plan centering on a Caravan Practice with the Chinese University of Hong Kong was laid out. The members decided on conducting two workshops in order to further discuss and work out a shared perspective on the major issues of concern.

The first research workshop was held on June 3, 2020, in the form of a semi-closed/semi-open online session. Presentations were delivered by Kiyonobu Date, based on the aforementioned preliminary essay, and also by Cheung Ching-yuen, “Hong Kong as a Small Nation.”

The second research workshop was held on September 15, 2020, likewise in the form of a semi-closed/semi-open online session. The presentations included: Hiroyuki Ogawa, “Decolonization of the British Empire and the Shaping of the Modern World: Disintegration into Federal States and Small Nations”; Kazuyo Tsuchiya, “What the Black Lives Matter Movement Calls into Question: The Decline of the Welfare State and the Rise of the Penal State in Modern America”; and Taro Tsurumi, “Transplanted Memories of the Pogrom: ‘West’ and ‘East’ in the Eyes of a Russian Zionist.”

The major Caravan event of the year took place on December 20, 2020. Collaborating with the Chinese University of Hong Kong, a public symposium, “Questioning the Idea of a ‘Small Nation’ in East Asian Contexts” was held, co-hosted by the East Asian Academy for New Liberal Arts (EAA). The presentations included: Date Kiyonobu, “A Small Nation Feigning to Be Something Greater: the Dynamic Relation between the Secular and the Religious in Japan” (Commentator: Regina Fu Hoi Yee, Senshu University); Cheung Ching-yuen, “Philosophy in Hong Kong after 1949: Tang Chun-i, Lao Sze-kwang and Cheung Chan-fai” (Commentator: Cheung Yuk Man, Ritsumeikan University);

Stephen Nagy (International Christian University), “Japan's Hong Kong Conundrum, the Future of Hong Kong, and the ‘China Dream’” (Commentator: Saulius Geniusas, Chinese University of Hong Kong). A detailed report on the symposium is available for reference on the EAA website (<https://www.eaa.c.u-tokyo.ac.jp/blog/questioningsmallnation/>).

Finally, at the second meeting held on March 12, 2021, the caravan outlined a plan for the coming academic year. In the academic year 2021, we will be welcoming two new members (Sana Sakihama and Hiroki Tanaka), and plan to conduct a Caravan Practice with Université Laval in Quebec in November. An international symposium is also in the planning, inviting Katsuya Hirano, Associate Professor of History at UCLA, and O. A. Westad, Professor of History at Yale University.