

International Conference

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Session 4: Rehabilitating Biospheric Perspective in the Modern World

This session aimed to discuss the potentialities of mediating the biospheric perspective on life and the world in the Asian and African regions so as to create sustainable humanosphere.

The first presentation of the session was made by Makoto Nishi who focused on HIV/AIDS initiatives promoted by different stakeholders in the Gurage Zone of southern Ethiopia. He demonstrated how the virus affected the productive and reproductive systems of those within the communities and how the medical technologies such as HIV testing kits and the anti-retroviral treatments are the problems as well as solutions for local people. For example, the advent of testing kits revealed existing HIV discordance within the community. According to Nishi, the Gurage was on the way to develop knowledge and practice so as to live with HIV. For them it is not individuals but their society as a whole who is supposed to be living with the virus.

On the other hand, Shuhei Kimura discussed how people in Istanbul learned to live with earthquakes. Although quite a few people perceived the earthquake in an Islamic way, they tried to make their understanding of the mechanisms of the Geosphere, uniting scientific knowledge transmitted through the media and information released by the local government. People recognized Istanbul's vulnerability to future earthquakes and followed scientists' call to learn to "live with" earthquakes. They attempted to develop their own logic and practices as a hybrid of science, religion, and traditional values.

Harro Maat in his presentation discussed the technology and science involved in the evolution of rice cultivation. He proposed to recognize "teconography" as the key methodology to understand how human society developed an intricate connection with the bio-material world to create a variety of technicalities. He demonstrated through his account of rice technology and science within different ecological and social configurations that agriculture was an organic combination of biosphere and humanosphere and that there was no single stable state of ecology (or biosphere). He also emphasized that to develop a sustainable humanosphere we had to recognize that

sustainability was a temporal property, subjected to the laws of evolution.

The last presentation of the session was made by Akio Tanabe who proposed to reconsider the potentialities of the biospheric perspective for reconstructing humanosphere. According to Tanabe, peoples in Asia and Africa developed the ecological and cultural values and practices that see life as part of an interdependent and interrelated nexus. Although modern scientific thought has seen human and nature as two distinct spheres, they were not in fact separated in the modern period. Rather, humans and things were connected more than ever before through scientific technology, and hybrid networks of nature and society were established. Therefore, the challenge today is how we can mediate local and regional potentialities with frontier science such as medical science, earthquake science and agronomy. Tanabe concluded that, when the potentialities of local knowledge could be mediated with contemporary frontier technologies, institutions and values, the possibilities of global creativity for constructing sustainable humanosphere should increase.