

教育学研究科・グローバル教育展開オフィス

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国際学会：25th International Graduate Student Conference
参加地・期間：Honolulu, Hawai'i, US・2026年2月12日～2月15日
発表題目：Forgotten roles of rote learning: recovering tradition as a possible counter to global governance

成果の概要

As first presenter, and alongside University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's JD Parker, we participated and presented at the 25th International Graduate Student Conference (IGSC), hosted by the East-West Center. The IGSC is characterized by bringing graduate students from multiple academic fields but with a geographic focus on the Pacific region. This year's edition hosted over 150 speakers, between paper and poster presentations. It became, to me, an invaluable opportunity for interdisciplinary and international exchange, fostering multiple moments of learning and dialogue.

We presented on the field of comparative education, contrasting 'rote learning' and 'inquiry-based learning' (IBL) pedagogies. Acknowledging the growing significance of IBL in the Japanese curriculum, alongside criticism over traditional modes of education, our paper strove to recover the forgotten roles of rote learning. Concretely, we investigated practices in Japanese religious and aesthetic education, identifying a hermeneutics of hope sustaining the pedagogy: students, upon believing their teachers to have some knowledge, skill or insight beyond them, repeatedly imitate their masters to 'steal' their form. We argued that, beyond (or, through) knowledge and skill acquisition, rote learning aims at character transformation towards well-regarded religious or aesthetic dispositions. It encourages students to find their own paths, even if towards traditionally established forms, and, upon understanding these forms, to creatively iterate on this tradition. In this sense, we identified three contrastive points between rote learning and IBL: rote learning deviates from the suspicion to previous knowledge which sustains IBL, for instead of progressing knowledge and skills acquisition it strives for character transformation, nonetheless fostering students to creatively iterate tradition. Ultimately, we contended that while criticality is a priori condition to inquiry-based learning, criticality is what is made possible at the outset of rote learning.

Our presentation was well received by the audience. We attribute this success to the strategic juxtaposition of a familiar pedagogy with an alternative pedagogy. The neutral portrayal of IBL helped the audience to relate and see themselves in this approach. In contrast, the presentation of an alternative pedagogy, grounded on different intentions and practices, might have opened up the audience to acknowledge the possible value of rote learning. Furthermore, I also have ample opportunity to learn from other presenters. For one, while the influence of Zen Buddhism to Japanese education is well recognized, this conference gave me the opportunity to learn about different varieties of Buddhism occurring in different countries in the Pacific region, enabling me to extend my descriptions while remaining aware of regional idiosyncrasies.

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Due to this conference, I was able to engage with University of Hawai'i's Brent Edwards, a leading figure in Comparative Education. In the previous months, as a research assistant under the guidance of Higher Education course's professor Machi Sato, we have hosted a series of seminar in Japanese-type education at Kyoto University, giving continuity to other large-scale projects being supported by the Global Education Office. We intend to transform this seminar series into a graduate class, while the establishment of a similar course on Japanese education is being considered at University of Hawai'i under Brent Edwards' direction. This contact opened dialogue and the possibility of either establishing a jointly offered course, or, another seminar series with attendees from both universities – however, making this intention concrete will require much effort moving forward. Moreover, I was able to establish meaningful dialogue with the Dean to East-West Center, Ann Hartman, who watched our presentation with great interest and engaged with us in dialogue afterwards. She requests that we share the academic article that we plan on publishing from this presentation, an auspicious indication of the work's relevance and a step that may open up further collaboration and opportunity with the renowned East-West Center.

Lastly, beyond the paper that was presented, the knowledge that was learned, and the people that were connected, having the opportunity to present at this conference taught me much about 'presenting' itself, highlighting not only the successes, but the shortcomings in my effort. In moving forward, I hope to draw on these experiences to further develop myself as an academic. For all these opportunities, I am grateful to the support and funding from Graduate School of Education's Global Education Office at Kyoto University.