

Cambridge

International Symposium to be held at the University of Cambridge in 2006

Integrating the Humanities: the Roles of Classics and Philosophy

Morning Session

Chair: Kunitake Ito

Speakers:

David Sedley (The University of Cambridge)

Hesiod's Theogony and Plato's Timaeus

Shinsukue Kawazoe (Kyoto University)

The Classical Traditions in Medieval Scholastic Philosophy

Elizabeth Craik (The University of St. Andrews and Kyoto University)

Classical Studies in Britain and Japan

An outline of the papers to be delivered during the morning session

The main question we wish to address during this symposium is: can cultures be integrated from the standpoint of human sciences, separately from the globalization driven by technology and capital, and if so, how this objective should be accomplished. The title of the symposium is 'Integrating the Humanities: the Roles of Classics and Philosophy'. The reasons for bringing together philosophy and classical studies in order to deal with this issue are as follows: the classical studies pursued in the West since their revival during the Renaissance, centered on the Greek and Roman cultures, have always cut across literature, philosophy, and history. The global-scaled, contemporary classical studies have maintained this approach. The holistic nature of philosophy leads it to enter the most varied spheres of human mental activity, such as science, religion, and the arts, and seeks the capabilities of human spirit. In other words, classical studies and philosophy, availing themselves of different methods, go across a multitude of fields, offering a perspective that enables their comprehensive understanding.

The theme of the symposium, attempting to place the focus on classics and philosophy as the integrative foundation of the humanities, does not aim at creating a single-centered pyramidal structuring of the human sciences. Resting on such a twofold basis, it tries to oversee the contiguity of various types of mental activities to seek a compound perspective based on their elliptic integration, with two centers of gravity. It is our firm belief that such a comprehensive vision, independent from the technology-driven globalization, constitutes a style of thought that is needed by today's humanity.

The aim of the papers presented in the morning session is to assess the nature of the

problems common for all presentations discussed during the symposium. In particular, the underlying claim, organizing the discussion, is that disciplines such as classical studies and philosophy, seen as sciences integrating the humanities are, at their very foundations, of an inherently compound nature.

The first paper, *Hesiod's Theogony and Plato's Timaeus*, will examine how the Greek tradition of cosmogonic myth, stemming from Hesiod in particular, throws light on both the form and the philosophical meaning of Plato's great work on teleology. The second contribution, *The Classical Traditions in Medieval Scholastic Philosophy*, outlines the influences of various classical traditions upon the medieval scholastic philosophy after 13th century, especially focusing its attention on the notion of "philosophy" which has been transfigured as a result of the introduction of Aristotelian philosophy. This contribution by a Japanese researcher of the scholastic philosophy is of particular significance for seeking the intersection points of classics and philosophy. Finally, *Classical Studies in Britain and Japan* looks back at the teaching and research experience gained in Japan by a British scholar from the field of classical studies, and discusses the salient characteristics of these studies in the East and West. Attention is focused on the significance of Western classical studies in a country like Japan, in which they are pursued in an entirely different historical and cultural context.

The three contributions outlined above further acknowledge the existence of a compound structure in the fields that are integrative in nature, such as philosophy and classical studies. By virtue of this structure, it becomes possible to identify the strategic perspective demanded by a complex character of the program postulating integration of the humanities.