

Speaker: Wren Nishina

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Title: Shinobu Orikuchi: Towards the Materialist Ontology of Souls

Abstract: The *second* greatest folklorist and ethnologist of Japan after Kunio Yanagita, for this reason Shinobu Orikuchi (1887-1953) was also the most important. In this paper I will attempt a reading of his last, difficult essay 'The Otherworld-Notion in the People's Historical Sense,' wherein we find the underpinnings of a veritable materialism of souls. What has been read as a mere compendium of 'the (Japanese) people's' soul-notions, is in fact a double strategy 1) to point out the existence of souls which are given no place in the dominant economies of salvation, and 2) to understand how, it is these very placeless, *incomplete* souls that constitute the generative principle for each dominant image of the soul-economy. The spiritual history of Japan, according to Orikuchi, is the succession of such disenfranchised souls being the motor behind changes in how souls are interacted with, without ever achieving a determinate place in any of these narratives. History would thus be less a progression and more the irruption time and again of the ancient (古代) in the modern (近代), and its subsequent obfuscation. From here I will give indications on how this regard for the lost souls must itself be turned on its head to construct a genuine materialism of souls.

Japanese Philosophy Network 8th Meeting

17:00-18:30, 23rd July 2024

Seminar Room (11) 1F. Bldg. 101

The University of Tokyo Komaba Campus I



Coorganizers: East Asian Academy for New Liberal Arts, the University of Tokyo (EAA) and The University of Tokyo Center for Philosophy (UTCP)

