
From the Kamakura period onward, especially due to the popularity of mountain cult worship, stories of places real or imagined went far beyond mere entertainment for the Japanese. One such example is Mount Katsuragi in Nara prefecture. This sacred mountain is associated with Chūjōhime’s cult, Taima-dera, and the Taima mandala which is a cosmic diagram of Amida Buddha’s Pure Land Western Paradise. Medieval texts describe Mount Katsuragi as an actual location of both Buddhist paradise and hell. Storytellers compiled such legendary beliefs into the Taima-dera jikkai- zu byōbu, a set of folding screens dated 1693 and enshrined in the inner sanctuary at Taima-dera, which depicts the local landscape of Mount Katsuragi as a portal to the other world. Previous scholarship has touched on the relationship between Chūjōhime’s cult, Taima-dera, and the Taima mandala, but has failed to address the full spectrum of religious, literary and visual influences that contributed to forming Mount Katsuragi’s dual images of a physical Buddhist pilgrimage site and ideological Buddhist paradise, a marginal place both real and imagined. By examining the reflexive interplay between the textual and visual configurations in the Taima-dera jikkai-zu byōbu, this paper focuses on the production and appropriation of space to illustrate how spatial practices at Mount Katsuragi were mapped onto images and how, inversely, spatial practices which resulted from worship of the Taima-dera jikkai-zu byōbu were mapped onto the actual landscape. My goal is to show that the spatial
Kari Shepherdson-Scott, Macalester College: “Entertaining War: Spectacle and 'The Capture of Wuhan' Battle Panorama of 1939”

In 1939, the Building Greater East Asia Exposition (Dai tōa kensetsu hakurankai) opened in Nishinomiya City in Hyōgo prefecture to great fanfare. Sponsored by the Osaka Asahi Shinbun Company, the exposition attracted approximately 1.3 million visitors to exhibits dedicated to the ongoing “Holy War” (seisen) with China, a conflict which was by then in its third year. The highlight of the exposition was a massive, open-air panorama narrating the Japanese “Capture of Wuhan” in 1938. Located in a transformed sports arena, the panorama was dazzling in its monumentality and dramatic battle recreation. The 20,000 square meter field was populated with models of charging Japanese soldiers, field guns, and tanks; large-scale models of Japanese fighter planes on zip lines also periodically flew across the field of battle to execute dramatic air raids. This paper explores “The Capture of Wuhan” panorama as part of a representational matrix in operation in the first years of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), dynamically narrating the military campaign for civilians on the home front in an effort to mobilize them in a “total war” campaign. I argue that, like earlier panoramas from the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), the “Capture of Wuhan” panorama operated at a provocative juncture between sober edification and tantalizing entertainment. To understand better the complex negotiation of these seemingly paradoxical functions, this paper will examine the Wuhan panorama and the larger exposition grounds as a site of embodied militarism, used to consolidate individual spectators into a unified and energized body politic.

HOTEL: Two room blocks have been set aside for MCAA. For information on those, go to http://www.eaps.illinois.edu/mcaa-2016/hotels.html.

LOCAL CONTACT: Betsy Lublin (aj8580@wayne.edu, cell 248-376-0368)

REVISED DINNER: To enable all who would like to attend the final MCAA session of the day and an evening screening of David Plath’s new documentary, the MJS dinner on Friday, Oct. 14, has been moved to campus and will be catered by Siam Terrace. The exact location will be the Lucy Ellis Lounge, located in room 1080 of the Foreign Languages Building, just a hop and a skip from the conference headquarters. The food should arrive around 5:45, and we will have the lounge until 7:30. The selected menu includes a range of options for vegans, vegetarians, pescatarians, and carnivores, and has a per person cost of $25, inclusive of water and pop, taxes, delivery, and tip. Payment can be made in cash (exact change appreciated) or check made out to Elizabeth Lublin. Given this arrangement and the need to confirm the quantity of food in advance, firm RSVPs are required and needed by Oct. 10.

CAMPUS MAP: http://illinois.edu/map/map.pdf

TRANSPORTATION: Following is the link from the MCAA website with information about transportation: http://www.eaps.illinois.edu/mcaa-2016/local%20info.html.
To receive PDF copies of the papers, please e-mail Betsy Lublin (aj8580@wayne.edu) by September 25. Also, please indicate if you intend to join for dinner on Friday evening.

REMAINING SCHEDULE FOR 2016-2017

Nov. 5, 2016  Michigan State University
Luke Franks, History, North Central College
Kazue Harada, Literature, Miami University

Feb. 11, 2017  University of Memphis
David Blaylock, History, Eastern Kentucky University
Anne Sokolsky, Comparative Literature, Ohio Wesleyan University

April 8, 2017  St. Xavier University
Beth Widmaier Capo, English, Illinois College
Tanya Maus, History, Peace Resource Center, Wilmington College

MJS Website: http://www.wmich.edu/japancenter/seminar

THE MIDWEST JAPAN SEMINAR IS MADE POSSIBLE BY A GENEROUS GRANT FROM:

THE JAPAN FOUNDATION