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2025 KYOTO LECTURES

Friday, March 18th, 18:00h

Stephen Roddy

SPEAKER

Urbane Waters The Worldliness of Gion, ca. 1825

Is a truly cosmopolitan sensibility possible where foreign travel is nearly impossible? In spite of the ease of maintaining virtual connectedness in today's world, this question once again seems worth asking. This talk examines some examples of cultural omnivorousness across East Asia as manifested in the genre of bamboo branch lyrics (*chikushiji/zhuzhici/jukjisa* 竹枝詞), with a focus on *Ôtô shiji zasshi* 鴨東四時雜詞 (Miscellaneous Poems of the Four Seasons East of the Kamogawa, 1826), a sequence of 120 heptasyllabic quatrains set in Kyoto's Gion District. Its author, Nakajima Sōin 中島棕隱 (1779-1855), drew extensively from the West Lake *zhuzhici* tradition—the lodestar of such poetry in China—in limning the customs and habits of its *geiko* and *maiko* as well as multiple other cultural and physical charms of the district. Examining Nakajima's sequence in light of the genre's full geographical and historical expanse (from Katori to Kashgar, from Saigon to Svobodny, and from Bai Juyi to the Meiji era), the talk assesses how it situates Gion as a node within the cultural cosmopolis of late-pre-modern East Asia.

Stephen Roddy is a professor of East Asian literatures and languages at the University of San Francisco. Recent and forthcoming publications include *The Fragrant Companions* (a translation with Ying Wang of the 1651 *chuanqi* drama 「隣香伴」), *Writerly Engagement: The Reinvention of Chinese Literature in Europe and the Americas, 1910–2010* (co-edited with Zong-qi Cai), and articles on intellectual figures such as Gong Zizhen (1793-1841), Yu Yue (1821-1907), and Liang Shuming (1893-1988). In 2021-22, he has been a resident foreign researcher at the Nichibunken in Kyoto.

This lecture will be held on Zoom. The meeting link will remain posted on the ISEAS website top page (<https://iseas-kyoto.org>) from two days before the event.

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