

Japanese 50 Spring 2018: Midterm A

Discussion Section Fr. 11 (10 AM) Name K. C.

Part I: Five Questions (5 questions x 10 points)

Choose FIVE questions out of nine questions. Don't answer more than five questions. Each answer should be concise and about 7-8 sentences long. (You must answer a question in complete sentences.) Explain some of the key terms or social values or ideas discussed in the lectures and discussion sections, by drawing on at least one example from the (literary) texts or/and the films we examined in the first half of the quarter.

1. Discuss marriage politics in the Heian period. How did marriage politics function during the Heian period? How is it portrayed in the film?
2. In what ways do the *Kojiki* myths serve to justify or challenge the rule of the Yamato clans retrospectively? What are the contradictions or tensions found in the *Kojiki* myths?
3. Discuss the socio-political circumstance called "gekokujō." What is "gekokujō"? How is it depicted in the films or/and the readings?
4. How are the natural phenomena and imageries depicted by the *Kokinshū* and the film *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya*, respectively? What are the similarities or differences between them?
5. What is one of the important ideas or teachings of Pure Land Buddhism (or Buddhism in general) during the Heian and Kamakura periods? How is it portrayed in the films and/or the literary texts?
6. Discuss the sociopolitical ideology of "the unification of all under heaven." What is "the unification of all under heaven"? How is it depicted in the films or/and the readings?
7. Discuss how the warriors adopted some of knowledges, values, behaviors, or skills associated with the aristocrats and the imperial court. What kind of knowledges, values, behaviors, or skills did the warriors adopt? How are they portrayed in the films or the readings?
8. Discuss briefly how the film *Princess Mononoke* portrays the changes in the relationship between human and nature. What are some of the different views of the forest (nature) depicted in the film? (How does each character view and understand the forest?) Does the forest return to its original state at the end of the film? If so, how? If not, why?
9. Discuss the relationship between Rikyū and Hideyoshi depicted in the film *Rikyū*. What are the differences or similarities between Rikyū's and Hideyoshi's aesthetic tastes and preferences? How do their differences or similarities affect their relationship in the film?

Part 1 ANSWERS

Answer to question number (1)

Marriage politics in the Heian period was a way for people to move up in socioeconomic status and get into the imperial court. However to marry into the imperial court, suitors as well as women had to follow court etiquette from being able to write waka poems, to playing instruments, to having refined tastes and appreciation for nature, to wearing pale makeup and heavy kimonos. In the film it is portrayed through Kaguya's interactions in the imperial court. She is told to ^{and act} ~~act~~ a certain way and is always being presented as a potential ^{spouse} ~~candidate~~ for noblemen as this would allow her family to move up in status. Consequently despite having many suitors in the film, Kaguya is liked for ^{appearance} ~~and~~ not liked for her personality ~~and~~ who she is. Marriage politics becomes so overwhelming for Kaguya in the film that she ^{briefly} ~~wishes~~ wishes to return to the moon realm. Thus, through this lens the film can be seen as a critical commentary on marriage politics during the Heian period. Excellent!

Answer to question number (2)

The social-political circumstance gekokujo literally describes "the lower overcoming the upper". This is depicted in Princess Mononoke as the iron town is an embodiment of Gekokujo where all these marginalized groups ^{such as uppers and courtiers} have come together to form their own self-sustaining government and fend themselves against other daimyos and attackers. Moreover as the film was set in a time in which nature was still revered and even feared, Lady Eboshi's attempt to kill the all-mighty deer god can also be viewed as Gekokujo. Good. Similarly Gekokujo is also seen in the film Rikyu as it is Hideyoshi who ~~started~~ started off as a peasant slowly working his way up and defeating Akeshi to become the military leader, and unifier of Japan. Hideyoshi starts off being lower than Rikyu as Rikyu had always been close to Oda Nobunaga before Hideyoshi's rise to power but it is evident by the end of the film that Hideyoshi had higher power as it is he who orders the death of Rikyu. This is also visible in how he tries to convince everyone that his mother had served the emperor, trying to hide the fact that they had started off with a lower socioeconomic status.

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Answer to question number (7)

Warriors adopted the knowledge, values, skills, and behaviors of aristocrats as a way to strengthen their power ~~such~~ that they can be seen as people of high status.

For instance some warriors wanted to learn the way of Tea. This is very evident in film Rikyū in which Hideyoshi eagerly wants to learn the way of Tea from the best and most respected master, Rikyū. Similarly some warriors also adopted the aesthetic and artistic values of aristocrats relating to literature, music, ^{and} appearance. For example, in the Tale of Heike, Atsumori, a young warrior, is depicted as having a flute with a pale face and blackened teeth which are the exact characteristics associated with aristocrats. As these behaviors were connected with aristocrats, it allowed warriors who were ~~not~~ ^{raised and born into} aristocrats to assume power.

Answer to question number (9)

Rikyū and Hideyoshi's relationship is two-fold. One is where Rikyū is the tea master and Hideyoshi is the tea disciple in which Hideyoshi needs to ~~bow~~ bow down to get through the little door to Rikyū's tea room (Rikyū's space). The other is where Hideyoshi is the warrior with absolute power and Rikyū is there to serve him. In regards to their aesthetic tastes, Rikyū holds his wabi sabi values or values of imperfectness and simplicity. This is seen in the film by how he is wearing all black and prefers black tea cups. ~~Whereas~~ Hideyoshi meanwhile is more flamboyant and showy with his aesthetic tastes as he prefers red tea cups and wears a colorful kimono and gold shoes. Their ^{distancing} aesthetic tastes are reflected in their personality and viewpoints. Hideyoshi wants to invade Korea while Rikyū does not and it is Rikyū's lack of support for Hideyoshi's plans which causes a rift in their relationship. On the other hand their similarity in both being ^{arrogant} stubborn is also a source of negatively affecting their relationship. Rikyū ~~could~~ could have prevented the placing of his statue above the temple gate where everyone now entering the temple must walk under him. ^{this in combination} Likewise with Hideyoshi's arrogance/stubbornness in refusing to accept Rikyū's statue placing causes the ultimate conflict between them.

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Yes!!

Answer to question number (8)

Princess Mononoke portrays the changes through several parties.

First is Ashitaka's village who greatly respects nature as

Ashitaka is told to find the cause of the suffering of the boar.

Second is Lady Eboshi as she shows no fear for nature and can be seen as the vanguard of those leading this change in relationship with nature.

Third, there is the emperor who due to his decline in power desperately wants to attain power by ordering the retrieval and cutting off of the deer god's head. In regards to the viewpoints on nature Lady Eboshi and the emperor view the

forest as a source of economic wealth but also as an obstacle to that wealth. Meanwhile, San views nature as this place that needs to

be protected. Likewise, some members of Iron town like the man who Ashitaka saved, view the forest as this place that needs to be feared and respected.

At the end of the film although the grass and ~~the~~ trees return, the forest does not return to its original state as the deer god and kodama spirits are all gone except for one little kodama in the very last scene of the movie.

Excellent!

Part II. Six Short Answer Questions on the readings and films (5 points each, 30 points total)

Choose **Six** questions out of eleven questions. Please be aware that **each** question contains **two** parts. You must answer **two** parts of the question, using approximately 1-2 sentences for each part. Do not answer more than six questions.

1. In *Kojiki*, why does Amaterasu confine herself in the cave? What leads her to leave the cave?

Amaterasu confines herself in a cave because Susanoo came and destroyed parts of her land and causing the death of one of her people. All the other gods and spirits singing outside the cave leading her to believe that they do not miss her is what leads Amaterasu to leave the cave.

2. In the film, *Rikyū*, what does Hideyoshi do at the imperial court? What topic does Rikyū decide not to bring up in his meeting with Tokugawa Ieyasu?

Hideyoshi serves tea to the emperor. Rikyū decides not to bring up the topic of invading Korea.

3. In *The Tales of the Heike*, what does Atsumori look like? Why does Kumagae hesitate to kill Atsumori?

Atsumori looks like a ^{young} aristocrat with pale face and blackened teeth. ^{and a flute.} Kumagae hesitates because Atsumori is very young and reminded him of his own son.

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4. In the film, *The Tale of Princess Kaguya*, what event makes her wish to return to the realm of moon? What happens to Princess Kaguya when she wears the robe given by the attendants of the Buddha descending from the realm of moon?

When the emperor approached her and hugged her from behind when she wanted no part of the marriage politics and the part of him is what lead her to ^{want to} return to the realm of the moon.

• When Kaguya wears the robe she loses all ^{of the} memory she had on Earth

5. In *A Collection of Tales from Uji*, what kind of "evil karma" (evil deeds) does a retainer of the Tada neophyte commit during his lifetime? Why is he saved and sent back to the realm of human after he died?

~~The retainer of the Tada neophyte hunted~~ ^{and killed} animals for sport during his lifetime.
~~He is so~~

6. In the *Kojiki*, what does Izanagi do after he escapes from the land of Yomi? What does Amaterasu give to Ninigi when he descends from the heavens?

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7. In the film *Princess Mononoke*, what kinds of people does Iron Town (Tatara-ba) accommodate? Why does Iron Town fight against the warlord Asano?

Iron town accommodates what Amiro would call *hinin* or nonhumans such as lepers and courtesans. Iron town fights against warlord Asano because Asano wants Iron town's resources and they are all fighting for themselves! during the war they have proved good. Another example of *Ge Kokugō*.

8. In *The Tales of the Heike*, why does Lord Kiso tell Tomoe to leave the battlefield right before his final battle? What does she do before she leaves the battlefield?

Lord Kiso tells Tomoe to ~~leave~~ the battlefield because Tomoe is a girl and Lord Kiso does not

9. In the opening scene of the film *Rikyū*, what does Rikyū ask his disciple to do with the flowers in the garden? What kind of entry door does Hideyoshi use to enter Rikyū's teahouse?

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10. In the film *Princess Mononoke*, what happened to the Emishi five hundred years ago? What does the old woman in the Emishi village tell Ashitaka to do in the land of West before he leaves the village?

The emishi were pushed to the outskirts by the Yato

11. In *A Collection of Tales from Uji*, what does the five-colored deer make the man promise to do when it saves his life? When the King finds out that the man breaks his promise, what does the King promise the five-colored deer?

The five colored deer makes the man promise to never reveal the deer's location.

The King ^{promises} to kill ^{the man} and that no one will ever bother it.
Does kill the man and promises that there will be a ban on hunting deer moving forward.

Part III. Five IDs of the passages from the literary works (4 points each, 20 points total)
Choose FIVE passages out of seven passages. Do not answer more than five questions.

For each of the following passages taken from literary works, identify a) the title of the literary work b) the period in which the work was written or compiled (the period or century), and c) the author's name. You must write "author unknown" if the author is not known. Write "N/A" for the author of *Kokinshū*.

The list of the titles

"Korea Day by Day," *Kojiki*, *The Tales of the Heike*, *Kokinshū*,
"Letter to the King of Korea," *A Collection of Tales from Uji*

EXCERPT 1:

The bells of the Gion monastery in India echo with the warning that all things are impermanent. The blossoms of the sala trees teach us through their hues that what flourishes must fade. The proud do not prevail for long but vanish like a spring night's dream. In time the mighty, too, succumb: all are dust before the wind.

Answer:

The Tales of the Heike, Kamakura period, author unknown

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EXCERPT 2:

This soft rainfall
it must be made of tears:
for who is there
that does not feel regret
when cherry blossoms scatter?

Answer:

Kokinshū, written in Heian period (905) by
Ki no Tsurayuki! ← he is the main compiler and
also contributed his own poems.
(Casey said ok to write this)
Good job!! +1

EXCERPT 3:

As I privately consider the facts of my background, I recognize it to be that of a rustic and unrefined minor retainer. Nevertheless: As I was about to be conceived, my dear mother dreamt that the wheel of the sun had entered her womb. The diviner declared, "As far as the sun shines, so will the brilliance of his rule extend. When he reaches his prime, the Eight Directions will be enlightened through his benevolence and the Four Seas replete with the glory of his name. How could anyone doubt this!" As a result of this miracle, anyone who turned against me was automatically crushed. Whomever I fought, I never failed to win; wherever I attacked, I never failed to conquer. Now that the realm has been thoroughly pacified, I caress and nourish the people, solacing the orphaned and the desolate.

Answer:

letter to the king of Korea by Toyotomi Hideyoshi
during warring states period

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EXCERPT 4:

The high mountains along the way are like nothing I have seen in Japan. The huge rocks are sharp as swords. There also are terrifying waterfalls; just looking at them makes my hair stand on end. This deserves to be called the traverse of the Mountain of Death or the crossing of the River of Hell. There is no place for a man to set his feet here or a horse its hooves.

How fearsome, worthy to be called the traverse of the Mountain of Death – this journey along the ridge of mountains that pierce the clouds.

Answer:

EXCERPT 5:

The emperor then asked Prince Little Mortar: "Why has your elder brother not come for such a long time? Is it perhaps that you have not yet admonished him?" He replied: "I have already entreated him." In what manner did you entreat him?" He replied: "Early in the morning when he went into the privy, I waited and captured him, grasped him and crushed him, then pulled off his limbs, and wrapping them in a straw mat, threw them away."

At this, the emperor was terrified at the fearless, wild disposition of this prince and said: "Toward the west, there are two mighty men called the Kumaso Braves. They are unsubmissive, disrespectful people. Therefore, go and kill them."

Answer:

Kojiki, ^{written in} ~~704~~ or Nara period, author unknown
712
-1

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EXCERPT 6:

And now the god took possession of one of the priests and announced, "Henceforward, I shall never again demand living sacrifices. I renounce them forever. I have learned my lesson about killing people. I shall never again take life. Further, let no one do anything to this man for having treated me in this way, nor harm the family of the girl who was to have been the sacrifice today. I shall start afresh and act as a guardian deity to her descendants throughout the ages to come. But I beg you, be quick and ask him to spare my life. Oh, whatever shall I do! Save me!" In astonishment, the chief priest and his assistants and a great mass of people crowded into the shrine, clamoring excitedly. "Surely he's right," they called. "Please do not refuse the god pardon, for he has given his promise." But the Easterner said, "Do not let him go like this. He has taken human lives, and I want to give him something to be sorry about. What happens to me is of no consequence. It won't matter if I am killed."

Answer:

A collection of Tales from Uji,
written in Kamakura period, author unknown

EXCERPT 7:

The emperor had barely turned eight but had the bearing of someone much older than that. The beauty of his face and form seemed to radiate all around him. His shimmering black hair fell down the length of his back.

Startled and confused, he asked, "Grandma, where are you going to take me?"

Gazing at his innocent face and struggling to hold back her tears, the nun replied, "Don't you understand? In your previous life you were careful to observe the ten good rules of conduct, and for that reason you were reborn in this life as a ruler of ten thousand chariots. But now evil entanglements have you in their power, and your days of good fortune have come to an end.

"First," she told him tearfully, "you must face east and bid farewell to the goddess of the Grand Shrine at Ise. Then you must turn west and trust in Amida Buddha to come with his hosts to greet you and lead you to his Pure Land."

Answer: