

TD NEXUS Transdisciplinary Research Newsletter Vol. 09

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Newsletter

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Dear Reader,

We would like to express our sincere appreciation for your continued readership of the TD NEXUS Transdisciplinary Research Newsletter.

Hidetaro Sugimoto: Carrying the Spirit of *Zhiyin* into the Future



Hakugayama, one of the celebrated *yamahoko* floats of Kyoto's Gion Festival, derives its name from the well-known Chinese story of **Bo Ya** (Boya), the master *qin* musician of the Spring and Autumn period, and **Zhong Ziqi**, the only person who truly understood the profound beauty of his music. According to tradition, after Zhong Ziqi's death, Boya lamented, "There is no one left who understands the sound of my *qin*," whereupon he cut the strings of his instrument and never played again for the rest of his life. This episode, recorded in classical Chinese texts such as the *Lüshi Chunqiu* (*Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals*) and the *Liezi*, has for centuries been transmitted throughout East Asia as the quintessential expression of **zhiyin** (Japanese: *chiin*), literally "one who knows the sound." More than friendship, *zhiyin* signifies a profound communion of character, spirit, and artistic sensibility—a relationship in which two souls resonate with one another at the deepest level. For this reason, Hakugayama has also been known as **Kotowariyama** ("the Mountain of the Broken Qin"), and has long been revered as one of the most spiritually significant floats of the Gion Festival.

The culture of Kyoto's townspeople (*chōshū bunka*) is far more than a system for maintaining traditional festivals. It embodies a distinctive aesthetic in which history continues to breathe within everyday life and art is elevated into the very fabric of human existence. The true essence of the Gion Festival lies not merely in its magnificent procession of floats, but in the civic autonomy cultivated by the townspeople, the careful

preservation of cultural treasures handed down through generations, and the spirit symbolized by the **Byōbu Matsuri** ("Screen Festival")—the conviction that beauty comes alive only when it is shared with others. Among the foremost custodians of this living tradition stands the Sugimoto family of Hakugayama-chō.

Since the Edo period, the Sugimoto family has served as the guardian of Hakugayama. Their residence, one of the largest surviving *machiya* townhouses in Kyoto, has been designated an Important Cultural Property of Japan. During the evenings preceding the Gion Festival, ancestral folding screens, paintings, calligraphy, furnishings, and works of decorative art are displayed throughout the house, transforming the residence itself into a living stage of cultural expression. This is not simply an exhibition of historical objects; it embodies the Kyoto ideal that beauty flourishes only through being shared.

The person who inherited this cultural legacy and brought its significance to wider public recognition was **Professor Hidetaro Sugimoto**—distinguished scholar of French literature, essayist, and one of the foremost interpreters of Kyoto's cultural heritage. Although internationally renowned as a leading authority on Western literature, Professor Sugimoto remained deeply rooted in the cultural landscape of Kyoto throughout his life. His essays repeatedly evoke the changing seasons, the soft light filtering through the lattice windows of traditional townhouses, the breeze passing through garden trees, the songs of birds, and the quiet beauty of the moon and falling snow. These were never mere descriptions of nature; rather, they expressed an East Asian worldview in which humanity and nature, art and daily life, exist in harmonious unity.

For Professor Sugimoto, Hakugayama was never simply one of the festival floats. It represented a cultural heritage embodying the spirit of *zhiyin*. The story of Boya and Zhong Ziqi is not fundamentally about extraordinary musical talent. Its deeper message concerns the capacity to understand art, to listen to another's heart, and to receive another's existence with profound empathy. Boya's breaking of his *qin* was therefore not an act of despair, but a symbol of an artist's integrity after losing the one person who truly understood him. This same spirit has resonated through the centuries with the people of Kyoto, who have faithfully preserved Hakugayama as an embodiment of that ideal.

Professor Sugimoto's cultural achievements extend far beyond literary scholarship and essay writing. His preservation of the traditional townhouse, his stewardship of the Gion Festival, his continuation of the Byōbu Matsuri, and, above all, his lifelong commitment to transmitting Kyoto's way of life as a living culture to future generations constitute his enduring legacy. Through the example of his own life, he demonstrated that culture is not a collection of artifacts preserved within museum walls, but a living organism that continues to breathe through the everyday lives of ordinary people.

Looking back, I consider myself deeply fortunate to have enjoyed the privilege of knowing Professor Hidetaro Sugimoto. We first met while I was a research fellow at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken) in Kyoto. From our very first encounter, Professor Sugimoto extended to me his generous understanding of my research and, over the years, graciously offered thoughtful guidance, wise counsel, and warm encouragement. His gentle countenance and quiet, measured manner of speaking remain vividly engraved in my memory to this day.

Among the many memories I cherish, one remains especially unforgettable. In March 2010, Professor Sugimoto kindly invited me to his home. While sharing cups of tea in the tranquil atmosphere of his traditional townhouse, he spoke quietly of the beauty of Kyoto's moon, the stillness of winter snow, the birds that visited his garden, and the Gion Festival. His words were never delivered as an academic lecture; rather, they allowed one to experience culture itself breathing silently through everyday life. The gentle spring sunlight filtering through the windows, the steam rising softly from the teacups, and the breeze stirring the garden trees all seemed to harmonize with his voice. In that quiet afternoon, I came to feel profoundly the spiritual depth of Kyoto—a city whose cultural traditions have been cultivated over countless generations.

Looking back now, I realize that those precious moments taught me the true meaning of *zhiyin*. To be a *zhiyin* is not merely to understand another through language; it is to share the same silence, to perceive the same beauty, and to cherish the same cultural spirit. Just as Boya broke the strings of his *qin* after

losing Zhong Ziqi, encounters with those who truly understand us are among the rarest blessings in life.

In an age increasingly marked by division and conflict, the philosophy of *zhiyin* has acquired ever greater significance. Rather than rejecting cultures or ideas different from our own, peace begins with the willingness to understand the spirit that lies beneath them. Throughout his life, Professor Hidetaro Sugimoto devoted himself to preserving the culture of Kyoto's townspeople and transmitting the spirit of *zhiyin* embodied by Hakugayama to future generations. That spirit continues to live quietly today—in the breeze passing through Kyoto's historic townhouses, in the melodies of the Gion Festival musicians, and in the hearts of those who continue to inherit this cultural legacy.

Ultimately, culture is humanity's continual endeavor to understand one another. The true legacy Professor Hidetaro Sugimoto left behind was neither merely a historic residence nor a festival tradition, but the enduring spirit of *zhiyin*—the invisible bond that unites one human heart with another. So long as that spirit continues to be passed from generation to generation, the silent music of Boya's *qin* will continue to resonate beneath the skies of Kyoto.

Sayuri Chen

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Newsletter

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皆様へ

いつも「TD NEXUS 学際研究ニュースレター」をご愛読いただき、心より感謝申し上げます。

杉本秀太郎「知音」の精神を未来へつなぐ



祇園祭の山鉾の一つに数えられる伯牙山（はくがやま）は、中国春秋時代の琴の名手・伯牙と、その真の理解者であった鍾子期（しゅんしき）の故事に由来する。伯牙は、自らの奏でる琴の妙音を唯一理解し得た鍾子期を失うや、「もはや我が音を知る者なし」と深く嘆き、琴の弦を断ち、終生再び琴を奏でることはなかったという。この故事は『呂氏春秋』や『列子』にも見られ、古来「知音（ちいん）」の典故として東アジア文化圏に深く受け継がれてきた。知音とは、単なる友情ではなく、人格・精神・芸術の奥底にまで共鳴し合う

存在を意味する。そのゆえに伯牙山は「琴割山（ことわりやま）」とも称され、祇園祭において最も精神性に富む山の一つとして、人々の敬慕を集めてきたのである。

京都の町衆文化は、単に祭礼を維持する制度ではない。そこには、歴史を暮らしの中に息づかせ、芸術を生活そのものへ昇華させる独特の美意識が宿っている。祇園祭の本質は、豪壮華麗な山鉦巡行のみならず、それを支える町衆の自治、家々に伝わる文化財の継承、屏風祭に象徴される「美を開き、人と分かち合う心」にある。その精神を今日まで受け継いできた代表的存在が、伯牙山町の杉本家である。

杉本家は江戸時代以来、伯牙山の会所を務めてきた旧家であり、その住宅は京都市内最大級の町家として国の重要文化財に指定されている。宵山には、代々伝来の屏風や書画、調度、美術工芸品が飾られ、町家そのものが文化の舞台へと姿を変える。そこには単なる展示ではなく、「美は共有されることによって生きる」という京都町衆文化の理念が息づいている。この杉本家を現代へ継承し、その文化的価値を広く世に伝えた人物が、フランス文学者・随筆家であり、京都文化の体現者とも称される杉本秀太郎先生であった。杉本先生は、西洋文学の泰斗として知られながら、その精神は常に京都という風土に根ざしていた。彼の随筆には、季節の移ろい、町家に差し込む光、庭木を渡る風、鳥の声、月や雪の静謐が繰り返して描かれている。それらは単なる自然描写ではなく、人間と自然、芸術と生活とが調和する東洋的世界観の表現であった。

杉本先生にとって伯牙山とは、一つの祭礼ではなく、「知音」という人間精神を象徴する文化遺産であったのである。伯牙と鍾子期の物語が語るのは、才能の卓越ではない。真に重要なのは、芸術を理解し、人の心を聴き、その存在を深く受け止める人格の在り方である。ゆえに伯牙が琴を断ったことは絶望ではなく、真の理解者を失った芸術家の誠実さを示す象徴でもあった。この精神は、京都町衆が数百年にわたり伯牙山を守り続けてきた理由とも深く響き合っている。

杉本秀太郎先生の文化的功績は、文学研究や随筆文学の世界にとどまらない。町家保存、祇園祭の継承、屏風祭の公開、さらには京都の暮らしそのものを文化として未来へ手渡したことに、その真価がある。文化とは博物館に収蔵される遺物ではなく、人々の生活の中で呼吸し続ける生命であることを、杉本先生は自らの生涯をもって示したのであった。

思えば、私が杉本秀太郎先生とのご縁を賜りましたのは、京都国際日本文化研究センター（日文研）の研究員として滞在していた折、初めて杉本先生にお目にかかったことに始まります。以来、先生は私の研究にご理解をお寄せくださり、折々に温かいご教示と励ましを惜しみなく賜りました。その慈容と静かな語り口は、今日なお私の胸中に鮮やかに刻まれております。とりわけ忘れ難いのは、二〇一〇年三月、杉本先生のお宅へお招きいただいた折のことである。静かな町家の一室にて清茶をいただきながら、先生は京都の月の美しさ、雪の静けさ、庭先を訪れる小鳥の姿、そして祇園祭について、淡々としてしかも深い情趣をもって語られた。その語りは学問の講義ではなく、一つの文化そのものが静かに息づく時間であった。窓越しに射す柔らかな春の光、茶碗から立ちのぼる湯気、庭木を揺らす微風、そのすべてが杉本先生の言葉と響き合い、京都という都市が長い歳月をかけて育んできた精神文化の深さを、私は身をもって感じたのである。

今にして思えば、そのひとときこそが、「知音」という言葉の真意を私に教えてくれた時間であったのかもしれない。知音とは、言葉を尽くして理解することではなく、同じ静寂を味わい、同じ美を感じ、同じ文化を慈しむ心を共有することである。伯牙が鍾子期を失って琴を断ったように、真に理解し合える人との出会いは人生において幾度もあるものではない。

分断と対立が世界を覆う現代にあって、「知音」の思想は、ますます重要な意味を帯びている。異なる文化や思想を排するのではなく、その奥底に流れる精神を理解しようと努める姿勢こそが、平和への第一歩であろう。杉本秀太郎先生は、その生涯を通じて京都町衆文化を守り、伯牙山に込められた知音の精神を現代へ伝えた。そして、その文化は今なお町家に吹く風の中に、祇園祭の囃子の響きの中に、静かに生き続けている。

文化とは、人が人を理解しようとする営みそのものである。杉本秀太郎先生が遺したものは、建物でも祭礼でもなく、人と人との心を結ぶ「知音」の精神であった。その精神が未来へと受け継がれる限り、伯牙山の琴の音は、今なお京都の空に静かに響き続けるに違いない。

陳 紗由理

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