

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

While a wide variety of phenomena may be dealt with under the rubric of religion and there are various academic approaches dealing with them, our basic strategy is to pursue religious questions through philosophical investigations. Underlying this stance is the insight that religion is not simply a matter of exceptional experience, special credo or organization, but a field that questions the origin of our “being-in-the-world” and that of our selfhood. The question “what is religion?” inevitably touches on the fundamental problems of philosophy. That is why we stand at the point where religion and philosophy face with each other while maintaining their difference and try to elaborate the way of thinking required therein. To explore “philosophy of religion” in this sense is the fundamental orientation of our department.

Such an orientation evolved out of the work of former members of the faculty serving within the department, such as Kitarō Nishida, Seiichi Hatano, Keiji Nishitani, Yoshinori Takeuchi, Shizuteru Ueda and Shōtō Hase. This development was often closely correlated with the evolution of the Kyoto School of philosophy. Hence, our curriculum does not offer courses based on descriptive or empirical approaches to religion, such as history, psychology, sociology or anthropology of religion. These categories, however, have not been closed off to our students; rather, researchers in philosophy of religion have been encouraged in recent years to move more freely to and from such empirical studies. The initial step for students wishing to enrol in this department is to identify where their own interest lies, since that essentially will be what guides students learning in our programs.



PHOTO : Study meeting in the laboratory