The Status Quo of Religion and Space Research

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Abstract. This paper presents the status quo of research on religion and space. It is analyzed from two aspects. One is European and American scholars’ study of religion and space, the other is Japanese scholars' study of religion and space. It is concluded that space theory provides new perspectives for all aspects of religion.

Introduction

The 21st century is the era of space. Since 1974, the French sociologist Henri Lefebvre published the book La production de l'espace, which triggered the so-called “space turn.”[1] In the book, Lefebvre questioned the traditional concept of space as an abstract stage and passive container, proposing a new theory that unifies the physical, social and psychological spatial concepts by emphasizing the continuous production and reproduction of space. Lefebvre focuses on space practice and spatial representation, discusses the historical mediation of space, emphasizing the importance of space production and reproduction.

In 1991, Donald Nicholson-Smith translated the book into English, heralded a new interest in space research and influenced a generation of postmodern thinkers, including Michael Foucault, Michel de Certeau, Edward W. Soja, Harvey, Shields and Doreen Marcy.[2]

The “space turn” initiated by geographers, after the 1990s and later, postmodern thinkers created a lot of work, trying to think and understand space in new ways. Since the turn of space, space has ceased to be seen as a static or inert background act, but as a stage for the formation of ideas, beliefs, principles, and values. Modern space theorists understand space as dynamic, relational, and angry. Space is intertwined with embodied and life experiences, touching every stage of social and cultural life, including religion.

European and American Scholars’ Study of Religion and Space

Since ancient times, space and religion have been studied in cosmology and geography. In geography, the Greek geographer Strabo used a religious imagination to trace the terrain of the ancient world.[3] In a similar way, the cosmology of the Jewish-Christian tradition provides space for the text. This tradition continued into the Middle Ages, when medieval scholars and theologians searched for and found correlations between the Bible and nature, assuming that the Bible accurately defined the spatial order. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, scholars began to try to unify scientific thoughts and scriptures. This creates a new type of geography, an emphasis on God's will and a Christian teleology. In this new genre, Gottlieb Kasche first proposed the term “religious geography” in his book Thoughts on Religious Geography.[4] Kascher introduced space into religion to create a comprehensive church geography. In addition to the typical theological understanding of space, early religious scholars such as Tylor, Frazer, Müller, etc. did not attempt to study the space and geography of religion in a non-denominational environment.[5]

In 1933, the “religious nature and performance” published by Gerardus vander Leeuw, the proponent of Dutch religious phenomenology, made the study of divine space a frontier of religious studies. Later, Mircea Eliade used the sacred space as his theoretical research in his book The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion. Eliad's attention to the sacred and sacred space laid the foundation for the introduction of space into the religious realm.[6]

Eliad's student Jonathan Z. Smith introduced spatial theory research into contemporary religious
through the world maps, Smith further extends the concept of space in religious studies. Space is not only a natural or material space, but also closely related to life and social organization, from which a sacred or awkward space is created. Later, Smith published the monograph “To Take Place”, in which Smith extended the sacred space from Iliad’s research as a phenomenological study to a research framework of anthropology and sociology. Smith believes that space is created through rituals, and rituals are processes in which people make their world (the space in which they live) a meaningful process.

Smith aims to think about the sacred space through a new perspective. The shift in space enables scholars in all fields to reassess the production of space in human life, many of which take into account the overlap of space and religion. Henry Lefebvre, Michel Foucault and Frederick Jameson recognize religious discourse and their influence on space production in their work. They all notice the relationship between space, time and history. Foucault wrote about the power discourse of religious institutions and how these institutions contribute to the historical production and shaping of space. Jameson pointed out that the postmodern world is dominated by space rather than time. Lefebvre wrote about the role of Christian institutions in the production of religious spaces and their performance in urban landscapes. As the space turned to gain more momentum, thinkers began to further recognize the meaning of spatial representation in religion. Subsequent scholars found space in almost all aspects of religion: holy places, landscapes, pilgrimages, ritual practices and manifestations.

In general, religious studies in the 21st century have transcended the study of the scope of divine space. For example, Lily Kong analyzes “global, national, international” in her article “Mapping 'New' Geographies of Religion: Politics and Poetics in Modernity” [9]. The distinction between region, place and body space calls for the analysis of new religious geographic regions based on gender and age. Kim Knott and Thomas Tweed also called for a spatial assessment of religious studies outside the sacred. In her book “Religious Location: Spatial Analysis”, Knott provides a spatial methodology for studying modern sexual religion. Through a survey of secular locations and objects, Knott aims to provide a new perspective on the relationship between religion and its physical, social and cultural realms. More specifically, Knot emphasizes the role of the body in spatial experience and representation in case studies: religion is on the left. Similar to Knott, Thomas Tweed's goal is to reposition religious studies through spatial theory in his book Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion. [10]. Tweed associates religion with three themes: “sports, relationships, and location”. He also constructed a religious definition based on spatial terminology: “Religion is the meeting point of organic cultural mobility, strengthening joy and facing pain by building home and crossing borders with the help of human and superhuman power”. Tweed's theoretical model allows us to treat religion as a spatial entity and apply the concept of space to the physical, social and cultural sites of religion. Tweed's research emphasizes the role of space in creating religious significance and has made tremendous contributions to the field of religious research. By focusing on the in situ, translocation, and superposition of religion, Tweed presents many spatial dimensions through which meanings are mapped into human experience.

Japanese Scholars' Study of Religion and Space

In his book The Holy Land of the Sea, Ueda discusses how some places in Japan developed into a sacred landmark of God, and developed a unique space theory in the waterfront of Kumano, Shikoku and Okinawa, and examined it. Function of the festival space is a monograph on Japanese folklore research. In the book, the author surveys, records and analyzes festivals, folk activities and folk performing arts throughout Japan. Focus on collecting and recording the literary and image materials of the Sumiyoshi Taisha Festival in Osaka, and investigating the stone lanterns set up on the campus to explore the status of the Sumiyoshi beliefs throughout Japan. [11]

In his book The Sacrifice Ceremony of Living Space, Sen Longman adopted the ceremony and reception as a viewpoint to study housing from the perspective of folklore. The reason for paying
attention to the ceremony is that it reflects the people's awareness of the living space and seems to be closely related to the nature of the residence. For ordinary people, is it an external visit to God, which is equivalent to being accepted as an official customer? The core of this book is to master how to deal with the gods in the living space of the ceremony. The home has a flexible structure that is repeatedly opened and closed at its internal and external boundaries. This is not only a natural environment, but also an invisible spiritual existence, such as the theme of visiting the gods.

In his book *Research on the Ryukyu Sacrifice Space*, Yi Congyi discussed the research on the architectural space of Ryukyu from the study of the style of the palace/temple before the Second World War to the study of private residences after the war, festival research, and shelter research in the village. It is a festival space theory covering pre-national rituals to existing folk rituals. As a method of stacking methods and knowledge, such as folk literature research, cultural anthropology, Okinawa research and other architectural spaces. This book details the environmental composition principles of Ryukyu ritual culture and the latest achievements in its historical development.

In his book *Religious Space in Japan*, Matsui Keisuke explains the religious issues of contemporary Japan from a spatial perspective. We will clarify the religious methods of contemporary Japan from the spatial level. This religious approach has developed very diverse and habitualized in the field work. In his book *Religion, Public Space*, Shimamoto discusses that religion is adopting a new form, independent of the binary opposition between the private and public domain. Through the examination of various theories and historical experiences, the study of religion and society, new academic thinking, from institutionalized "religion" to the continuous flow of "religious things".

Ogaki Takahashi discussed in the book *The God of the Internet: The Religious Space of the 21st Century* hat the Internet is opening up a new religious space. How does the connection between the cutting edge of the information society and the human soul problem change? Where can you see the appearance of the 21st century religious beliefs? This book will discuss the situation of the United States as a religious superpower in the Internet, considering the emergence of the "God" in the Internet space and the core future of the Internet era.

In his book *The Modern Balkan Urban Social History—The Religion and Race in the Diverse Space* (Modern Urban Social History—Diversified Space, Religion), Satohara analyzed the mid-19th century Balkans The implementation process of the policy and the resulting response. Position the historical data of the Ottoman Empire throughout the region and maintain the diversity of the Ottoman Empire.

Ogura Thai in his book *The Space Structure of the Indian World—Symbolism of Hindu Temples* is a study of what kind of meaningful space the Hindu temples represent as architectural spaces. Through the clues of the rich literature of the Indians themselves to “read” Hindu temples, the key to Indian civilization, such as “Mandara”, “Pursa”, “Space Axis”, clarifies the complex overlap of important symbols. In Hindu temples, key symbols of Indian civilization, such as “Mandara”, “Pursa” and “Cosmic Axis”, overlap. We explore the meaning of the space known as the Hindu temple through clues such as mythology and Hinduism.

Iso Shunichi’s book *Other Theories Turn to Religion and Public Space* (The Religious Public Space of Others) discusses the public nature of those excluded from public space. Discuss how to grasp publicity as a “multiple theory” field in which human beings coexist with others.

In the work of the peak shore *Japanese Corridor, Western Corridor: Beauty and Prayer Space* (Japan's cloister; Western cloister: the space of beauty and prayer) the writer walks up the corridor of the religious cathedral, describing the beauty it creates, its Creation history. Japanese temples and shrines, monasteries in the Middle East and the Middle East, mosque corridors, architectural spaces are compared, and the characteristics of religious space composition are also mentioned. In addition, “the space and corridors in religious buildings”, including the quality of religion, is based on what kind of relationship.

**Conclusion**

Space theory provides new perspectives and insights for all aspects of religion. More importantly,
space theory emphasizes people's understanding of the function of religion on many levels: in the body, in places of worship, in the national level, in the context of the Internet, and in the context of globalization.

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