

**Panel Title: Gary Snyder As A Node of Influence: Visible though
Philosophy, Invisible though Translation**

Gary Snyder is a pivotal figure in the transmission of East Asian thought in the American intellectual tradition. Much ink has been spilled about his translation of Han Shan's *Cold Mountain Poems*. However, there is much still to be gleaned from a comprehensive historical analysis of the influences Gary Snyder received as a student and as a young poet in the Beat and Counterculture movements of San Francisco in the 1950s and 60s. Equally as important are the influences Snyder had on various poets, writers, and translators to come. Through our respective talks, "Converging on the Mountain: Gary Snyder's Nodal Role in the Transmission of East Asian Thought" and "From the Spiritual Wilderness to the Natural Mountain: Gary Snyder as the Node of American Translators of Han Shan's Poetry," a prospectus on Snyder's position of power as a nodal figure in this historical moment will be offered for further engagement and discussion. Snyder plays a key role in solidifying and transmitting the conflation and bundling of Buddhism, Daoism, and wilderness into a singular trend of thought. This trend is the hallmark of the modern American conception of East Asian wisdom. As it has come to be popularized through various self-help books, like those of Benjamin Hoff, and works of popular scholarship, like those of David Hinton, the historical development of this thread of thought is worthy of further investigation.

**Converging on the Mountain: Gary Snyder's Nodal Role in the
Transmission of East Asian Thought**

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When examining the infusion and transmission of translated East Asian thought in the

American intellectual tradition, nodality can be a powerful tool. A node here is a person who has received multiple influences, and then gone on to directly influence a number of people working in similar fields. This intellectual influence exerts a shaping power in its focus of philosophical interest. Gary Snyder, the mid-century American poet and translator, is an apt case study for the role of nodal power in the transmission of East Asian thought.

I will be tracing the influences he received as a young poet, including his time at Berkeley with Chen Shixiang, his reading of D.T. Suzuki, and his attendance at the American Academy of Asian Studies. His immersion in a cultural milieu that was just beginning to thrill in the possibilities of ecological connection and spiritual ascension present in Buddhist and Taoist thought profoundly shaped the philosophy that infuses his poetry and his translation of *Cold Mountain Poems*. On the outgoing side of this nodal relationship, his centrality in the San Francisco poetry scene made Snyder a powerful influencing force. His relationships with Lawrence Ferlinghetti, the co-founder of City Lights Booksellers & Publishers, Jack Kerouac, the iconic author, and Allen Ginsberg, the revolutionary poet, among others, furthered the prominence of East Asian thought in the burgeoning Counterculture movement of the 60s and 70s. Pinpointing these points of contact provides insight into the spreading influence of Buddhist and Taoist thought in mid-century America.