**ETHNOBOTANICAL SURVEY OF *Usnea* IN EAST ASIA**

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Beard lichens (e.g. *Usnea longissima*) were presumably more popular in the pre-modern East Asia than in the present-day. They appeared in the earliest Chinese poetry, *Shi Jing*, (seventh century BCE) under the name of `Nüluo`. In the Japanese mythological book, *Records of Ancient Matters*, or *Kojiki* (seventh century), the goddess Amano-uzume who wore specific plants including Higage begun dancing near the cave. Identification of Hikage has been controversial among scholars. Mainly, Hikage is considered as *Lycopodium clavatum*, a species in Pteridophyta, but the well-known Japanologist of the Edo period Norinaga Motoori thought it as the beard lichens. Beard lichens were also listed in the earliest Chinese herbal text, Shennong Bencao Jing (the first century). In autumn, 2008 when I visited Beichuan (Mianyang), China, *U. longissima* was on sale in some local drug stores. In Japan, R. Dodoneus` *Crvydt boeck* (1554) was introduced during the Edo period from Holland. Herbalists investigated those medicinal plants described in the herbal book. There was an herb called `Boom mos` (*lit.*: tree moss) in the book, and Japanese herbalists have identified as `Saruogase` (i.e. Usnea). Besides, the Ainu, an ethnic minority in Hokkaido of Japan called bread lichens `nirek` (*lit.*: tree beard). According to old records, it was regarded as a sacred plant, thought as the beard of the gods, and should not be treated improperly. Today, these stories related with *Usnea* are less noted, but edible lichens *Umbilicaria* species might be more known among lichenologists. In this presentation, I will talk about the veiled history of lichens in East Asia, with a focus on *Usnea*.