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KYOTO LECTURES

Thursday, April 23rd, 18:00h

Robert Tierney
Nakagawa Shigemi

SPEAKER
DISCUSSANT

Anthropology and Literature The Colonial Journey of Satō Haruo

While Western scholars introduced the science of anthropology to Japan in the 1870s, Japanese scholars quickly "nationalized" this foreign science and brought it to bear on the aboriginal population of Taiwan, which quickly became the first overseas field in which they could work. As a genre of writing about primitive societies, anthropology offered a model that writers of fiction used to explore the cultures of exotic societies. The writer Satō Haruo traveled to Taiwan in 1920 and became acquainted with the anthropologist Mori Ushinosuke. In 1923, Satō wrote *Machō* (Demon Bird), a short work based on a passage in a book by Mori. The narrator of "Demon Bird" impersonates an anthropologist who is studying an episode of persecution in an unnamed barbarian village. At the same time, the story he tells is an allegory about Japanese persecution of Koreans during the Great Kanto Earthquake. "Demon Bird" is a story that uncovers unexpected links between colony and metropolis. The work is at once a deconstruction of colonial anthropology and an ethnographic critique of the Japanese empire.

Robert Tierney is Assistant Professor of Japanese Literature at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign and Visiting Professor at the University of Tsukuba. His *Tropics of Savagery*, a study of Japanese colonial period literature, is forthcoming from the University of California Press.

Nakagawa Shigemi is a Professor at Ritsumeikan University. His principal field of research is Modern and Contemporary Japanese Literature with a special focus on modernity, gender and cultural studies.

This lecture will be held at the Institute for Research in Humanities (IRH), Kyoto University (seminar room, 1st floor).

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