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2015 KYOTO LECTURES

Wednesday, June 26th, 18:00h

Rebecca Copeland

Kirino's *Kojiki* Feminist Adaptation in *The Goddess Chronicle*

SPEAKER

In her creative re-telling of the Izanami-Izanagi myth sequence, Kirino Natsuo picks up where the *Kojiki* leaves off, inventing an afterlife for the female-goddess Izanami. Sealed forever in Yomi, the Japanese source texts have very little more to say about Izanami. Rather, attention shifts to Izanagi and his offspring. But what, Kirino wonders, becomes of the goddess and her parting pledge to take a 1000 lives a day from the world of the living? Why is it that only the female deity is consigned to the realm of death, while her male consort, free to travel, goes on to produce the deities who will shape the imperial line? And finally, how does the positioning of the female deity predict the status of real-world women? In *Joshinki* (*The Goddess Chronicle*), her 2008 sequel to the *Kojiki*, Kirino explores not only the psychology of Japan's primal female, but the way depictions of her have influenced her mortal progeny. This talk will briefly situate *The Goddess Chronicle* alongside Kirino's more realistic fiction, explore the way Izanami has been received over time, and provide a general overview of feminist approaches to myth retellings.

Rebecca Copeland is professor of Japanese literature at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. Her research focuses on modern women's writing in Japan, and she is interested in both the practice and theory of translation. Among her publications are *The Modern Murasaki: Writing by Women of Meiji Japan* (2006), co-edited with Dr. Melek Ortabasi; *Woman Critiqued: Translated Essays on Japanese Women's Writing* (2006); and *Lost Leaves: Women Writers of Meiji Japan* (2000). She is the translator of *Grotesque* and *The Goddess Chronicle* by Kirino Natsuo in addition to works by Kishida Toshiko, Uno Chiyo, Hirabayashi Taiko, and others.

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

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