

picking off new shoots will not stop the spring

witness poems and essays
from Burma/Myanmar
1988–2021



edited by ko ko thett and brian haman

Sophia University Department of English Studies and the Institute of Comparative Culture Jointly presents:

“picking off new shoots will not stop the spring”

「ミャンマー証言詩集:いくら新芽を摘んでも春は止まらない」

Poetry and Political Reality -- Reading Myanmar Witness
Poems 1988-2021
(In English and Japanese)

January 15th, 2025 / 18:00 till 21:00

Room 409, Building 2, Sophia University

In person only / No registration necessary.



Yasuhiro Yotsumoto, poet and translator, will read from: “picking off new shoots will not stop the spring: Witness poems and essays from Burma / Myanmar 1988-2021”, which was recently translated and published in Japan.

We will explore the following topics in the context of the current situation in Myanmar, Japan and other countries: the relationship between poetry and political reality, the poets’ role in society, the distinction between “Witness Poetry” and “Protest Poetry,” “Swiat (World)” by Czeslaw Milosz as an archetype of Witness Poetry.

Yasuhiro Yotsumoto

Yasuhiro Yotsumoto, a poet, essayist, and translator, was born in Osaka in 1959. He has spent much of his writing career outside Japan, living for 8 years in the United States and 26 years in Germany, all the while continuing to write in his native Japanese. His body of work includes 17 poetry collections, 2 novels, and several volumes of translations, essays, and literary criticism. In 2020, he relocated to Tokyo, where he now teaches poetry at universities and regularly organizes live poetry events in Shinjuku. In 2023, he participated in both the Iowa International Writing Program and the Hong Kong International Writers’ Workshop. We will be joined by filmmaker Akio Fujimoto to talk about the current situation in Myanmar.

Akio Fujimoto

Akio Fujimoto is an award-winning filmmaker, based in Yangon and Tokyo. His first feature, *Passage of Life*, was a Japan/Myanmar co-production. His second feature, *Along the Sea* is about Vietnamese apprentices in Japan. He directs for NHK and is based in Yangon and Tokyo.

This event is jointly sponsored by the DES (Department of English Studies) and the ICC, Institute of Comparative Culture, and hosted by John Williams.