



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

EAST ASIAN STUDIES CENTER

Institute for Japanese Studies Lecture Series

Resurrecting Orikuchi Shinobu's *The Book of the Dead*

Jeffrey Angles

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Department of World Languages & Literatures
Western Michigan University

Friday, March 2, 2018

4:00-5:30 pm

Page Hall 010

1810 College Rd



Abstract: *Shisha no sho* (*The Book of the Dead*), completed in 1943 by Orikuchi Shinobu, is a modern Japanese classic that has inspired many adaptations, including an animated film and a manga. Inspired by the ancient Egyptian tale of Isis and Osiris, the novel is a sweeping, gothic tale about a strange affair between an inquisitive noblewoman and a ghost in the eighth century. Not only is the story unforgettable, the book is also a remarkable artifact, produced in the midst of the fervent nationalism and intense censorship of World War II. In this talk, Angles will untangle the novel's complex history, reveal some of Orikuchi's influences, and discuss the hidden political dimensions of the work. In particular, he investigates the parallels between earliest origins of the Japanese nation when the novel is set, and the rise of the Japanese empire in the twentieth century.



Bio: Born in Columbus in 1971, Jeffrey Angles is a poet, translator, critic, and professor of Japanese literature at Western Michigan University. Since completing his Ph.D. at OSU, he has been active as a scholar of modern Japanese literature and cultural history, publishing numerous books and articles, including the monographs *Writing the Love of Boys* and *These Things Here and Now: Poetic Responses to the March 11, 2011 Disasters*. His collection of original Japanese-language poetry *Watashi no hizukehenkōsen* (*My International Date Line*), published in 2016, won the highly coveted Yomiuri Prize for Literature, an honor accorded to only a few non-native speakers since the award began in 1949. In addition, he has published dozens of translations of Japan's most important modern authors and poets. His translations have earned numerous awards, including most recently the Scaglione Prize from the MLA for his translation of Orikuchi Shinobu's *The Book of the Dead*.

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