Translation is impossible but necessary -- so Gayatri Spivak stated in the International Symposium at the University of Hawaii (Translation: Theory, practice, trope, 22–23 January 2007). The difficulty is predictably greater when languages involved are culturally distant from each other. Regarding the difficulty of Japanese-English translation, Reischauer (1977) stated “Even assuming a perfect knowledge of both languages on the part of the interpreter, which is rarely the case, English and Japanese both suffer a radical transformation in being converted into the other.” Edward Seidensticker remarked more than once, “You can’t translate Japanese literature into English…”

What is translation? Why is it so difficult? What is radically transformed in translation, especially, in translation from Japanese into English? Where is the translator to be positioned between the translating and the translated language? The speakers will address such topics while sharing their experiences and knowledge with the audience.

『坊ちゃん』
『妙法蓮華経』
『梁塵秘抄』
『萬葉集』
Program

Moderated by David Ashworth

1. Retranslating the Already Translated: The Case of *Botchan* ...... Joel Cohn

*Botchan* is one of the relatively few Japanese novels that has been translated into English on multiple occasions; in fact my 2005 version was the fourth to be published, and not the last. I will touch on the rationale for producing multiple translations, and some of the specific questions that arose as I worked on this text.

2. Kumarajive –A great Sanskrit-Chinese Translator ...... Shingyo Imai

Will compare the Japanese/English translations of the Lotus Sutra based on orthodox Chinese translation by Kumarajiva with recent English versions directly translated from the Lotus Sutra in Sanskrit and will discuss how the original text was transformed in the Chinese translation and why it nevertheless became popular.

3. Translating the *Imayô* Songs of *Ryôjinhishô*. ...... Gladys Nakahara

Because the manuscript of *Ryôjinhishô* was not discovered until the 20th century, this important collection of Heian period songs had not been translated in its entirety. Although there are still several songs and portions of songs that are undecipherable, I published the first translation of all 571 extant songs of *Ryôjinhishô*. Some of the problems I faced and the solutions I arrived at will be discussed.

4. Pains of translating the *Man’yooshuu* ...... Alexander Vovin

“A literary translation will inevitably call for poetically-sounding English at the expense of the Japanese text. However, I want to present the Man’youshu to the reader having preserved to the maximum possible extent the flavor and the actual semantics of the (original) poems . . . . . I want the Japanese poets of that distant age (6th - 8th Centuries) to speak to the reader in their own words, and not on the terms of modern English poetics. “ (From the Preface)

5. Epilogue......Craig Howes

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