

Introduction of Professor Shirane

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

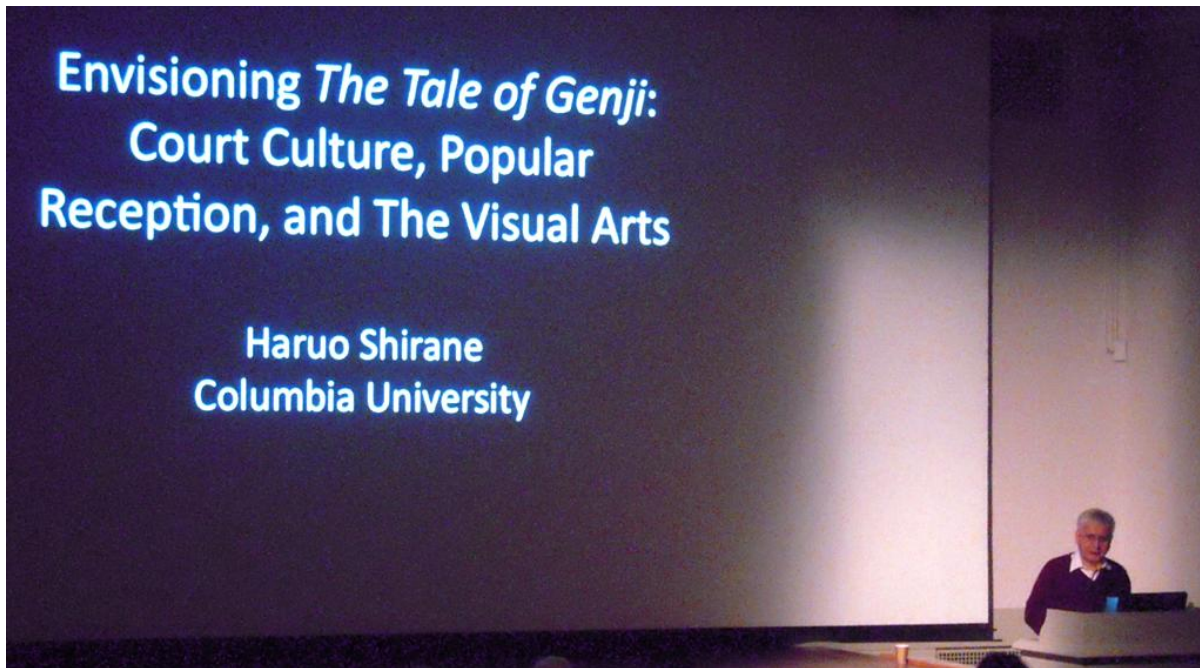
I. Luminous Exhibition

Last week, the Seattle Art Museum opened “Luminous: The Art of Asia” downtown. The exhibition includes treasures that are returning home after a year and a half in Japan. Their tour to 5 museums caused a quiet sensation among Japanese art lovers and experts all over the country.

On October 11th, I was fortunate to be among the first to welcome back the masterpieces of SAM. Seeing the pots, paintings and artifacts, I came to understand just how much Dr. Richard Fuller contributed to the Seattle art community through the donation of his collection.

II. Dr. Fuller and Prince Genji

To celebrate the 75th birthday of Dr. Fuller, sponsors donated painted screens depicting scenes from “The Tale of Genji.” When I heard that Dr. Fuller was a warm-hearted, artistic and intellectual gentlemen who attracted many female admirers, I couldn’t help but see similarities between him and the titular character, Hikaru Genji! The talented and admired Prince Genji communicated love through creating art and poetry, as Dr. Fuller expressed his own passions through collecting art. What an appropriate gift!



III. Professor Haruo Shirane

This morning, I am pleased to introduce Professor Haruo Shirane.

Haruo Shirane is the Shincho Professor of Japanese Literature and Culture, in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Columbia University, in New York City. He is a remarkable scholar of classic and early modern Japanese literature, with special expertise in “The Tale of Genji.” We are very fortunate to have him in Seattle today speaking to us in the building in which Dr. Fuller founded the Seattle Art Museum.

Professor Shirane received his MA in Japanese literature from the University of Michigan; and a PhD in Japanese literature from Columbia University. His interests include the interaction between popular and elite cultures; issues of cultural memory and language; eco-criticism, and cultural ideas about nature.

IV. Professor Shirane's Work

He has published widely, as author and as an editor, in both English and Japanese, including several anthologies of Japanese literature in English. He has written on topics from a book on *Classical Japanese Grammar*, to an article on "Food in Japanese Literature," and has also written extensively on the poet Matsuo Basho.

One of his published works on Genji is the volume titled *Envisioning The Tale of Genji: Media, Gender, and Cultural Production*, for which he was the editor and a contributing writer. He was also the editor and author of *Inventing the Classics: Canon Formation, National Identity, and Japanese Literature*. More recently, he has been working as a co-editor on a book titled *Reading The Tale of Genji: The First Millennium*.

V. In Closing

Professor Shirane has done very influential work on how works of Japanese literature have become classics, or part of a canon, as well as becoming part of popular culture. His work on teaching Japanese literature as part of the study of World Literature in English has also been influential, and probably has affected what literature you or your children are studying in school and college today.

I know you will enjoy his talk today, "Envisioning The Tale of Genji: Court Culture, Popular Reception, and The Visual Arts." Please join me in welcoming Professor Shirane.